

Elite Mages' Academy Novel

Chapter 201 - Talent Level Up (4)

Chapter 201: Talent Level Up (4)

After repeated advice and constant rambling about daily life, Xiao Lin was just about to get impatient when the woman found the communication room. What followed was a long wait, as the positioning for trans-spatial communication was still rather time-consuming. Fortunately, no charges were incurred during that time.

About 20 minutes later, the golden light that filled the entire room dimmed suddenly, and the Timesand stored in the emerald immediately began quickly flowing. As its speed grew and grew, the golden light became increasingly fainter until it disappeared completely. It was still pitch-black, but within a few seconds, a curtain of light suddenly appeared. Inside that light curtain was a blonde American woman with a professional-looking smile. She bluntly asked Xiao Lin who he was looking for.

After hearing that he wanted to contact Lilith, the American woman's smile froze slightly and she quickly gave a tact reply. "We will contact you as soon as possible, but the situation is unique with Miss Lilith. I don't think she'll agree to this communication request if you don't know her personally."

Xiao Lin expressed no issue with that and even seemed confident about it.

Another wait soon ensued, and Xiao Lin was getting a little uneasy because the trans-spatial communication was already connected and fell under the period where charges could be incurred. There were no clocks in the dark room, so he could only count the time silently in his heart and pray that the other party could contact Lilith as soon as possible.

More than four minutes later, the American woman in the light curtain appeared with the same faint smile. Xiao Lin barely squeezed out an ugly, almost-crying smile after he was made to wait. That short wait was already equivalent to losing 4,000 New Dollars. He finally understood why Chen Yu had that surprised expression after hearing that he was going to use trans-spatial communication.

It was extremely expensive despite its convenience, and for most people, it was simply unaffordable.

Dawn Academy's switchboard administrator was very relaxed and would even chat with Xiao Lin from time to time. She naturally understood that there was a charge during that period, but she was likely under the impression that Xiao Lin was loaded if he could spend so much money to use the service.

By the sixth minute, the light curtain fluctuated again like water, and Lilith's face finally appeared inside. She did not seem to be in the city, but that did not really matter.

“It really is you! I knew it. Other than you, there can’t possibly be anyone else from Dawn Academy who would call me using trans-spatial communication.” Lilith seemed to have expected it.

“Hey, hey, hey! Can anyone else hear me?” Xiao Lin shouted a few times instead of getting straight to the point. He cleared his throat after seeing Lilith’s strange expression. “Umm, I just wanted to confirm that the switchboard administrator isn’t eavesdropping.”

Lilith rolled her eyes. “Don’t worry. The latest technology in trans-spatial communication has enhanced confidentiality. Cut to the chase. I’m very busy.”

Lilith looked more anxious than Xiao Lin was. Just as he was about to open his mouth, he heard a scream and saw a body flying from behind Lilith, vomiting blood, and falling to the ground. Taken by surprise, Xiao Lin asked, “What are you doing?”

“Oh, just dealing with a gang of bandits. The natives never watch their step. How dare they target Judge Academy’s caravan.” Lilith made light of the situation.

At that moment however, Xiao Lin noticed the traces of blood present on the woman’s light armor. The battle seemed to be harder than her tone suggested, and the opponents appeared strong too. He could not control himself from expressing his concern for her. “You’re okay, right?”

Lilith was getting even more impatient. “I’m going to get in some real trouble if you don’t get to the point!”

In fact, Lilith would have long turned off the call if it was any other person. However, she was willing to endure a little more because she knew it was Xiao Lin. The latter was well aware that there was no time for nonsense, so he kept things as simple as possible. “Okay. I’ll get to the point then. How do you use this diamond? ”

“Diamonds?”

“The diamond used for leveling up.” Xiao Lin could not just directly mention that it was for his SS-level talent, but he believed that Lilith would definitely understand the hint.

Sure enough, Lilith went blank for less than a second and showed a dazed expression. She looked at Xiao Lin a few times in amazement, then dragged her scythe to split a guy who wanted to deliver her a sneak attack from behind. She even ignored the blood stains on her cheek and answered directly, “Just break it.”

“What? Break it? You’re telling me to break the diamond!”

“Yes, just break it!”

Xiao Lin was dumbfounded. No matter how much he racked his brain, he would never have expected the diamond to be used by breaking it. Still, he would never have used such a method if it was not approved by Lilith. Should a mistake happen, would he not have to trouble the dean to temper a new diamond?

“Don’t zone out! What else do you need!” Lilith’s tone was urgent as the battle seemed to become even more intense. She killed at least three or four bandits in just that short moment.

Xiao Lin hesitated for a moment and said softly, “There is one last request. It doesn’t matter if you agree or not. You know that I’m just a freshman, so it’s only natural that I don’t have much money. Our academy is about to usher in the third monthly exam too, and uh, you may not know this, but our monthly exam is related to the class monitor’s position...”

“Spit it out!”

“Well, in a nutshell, can you help pay half the cost of this trans-spatial communication?”

Despite having to avoid distraction during battle, Lilith had a blank look after hearing those words. She said not a word, and the light curtain suddenly disappeared, a sign that the other party had deliberately disconnected the call.

The room became bright again, and the Timesand in the emerald reappeared. Xiao Lin smiled with some regret. His last sentence was spoken half-jokingly, but it did not seem to have any effect. He roughly estimated the duration of his call and could feel his heart bleeding.

After leaving the communication room, the administrator looked at him strangely and said, “Your total is three thousand five hundred New Dollars. Just sign here after you pay.”

Xiao Lin was taken aback. ” Isn’t it a thousand New Dollars per minute? I talked for more than three minutes, didn’t I?”

She shrugged, “Before the switchboard from Judge Academy disconnected, they communicated to us that they’d pay half the total of expenses for this call. The total was seven minutes, so half of that would be three thousand five hundred New Dollars. This sum is the cost for the upkeep of energy consumption.”

Xiao Lin was amazed that Lilith would suddenly be so warm-hearted and actually helped him pay half. He felt a little smug and wondered if he had too irresistible a charm.

“Oh and, Judge Academy also said that the lady left you a message.”

“What did she say?” Xiao Lin asked curiously. He did not mention Lilith, even though it was certain that many of Dawn Academy’s people knew who she was.

“Just six words: ‘You need to pay me back’.”

Xiao Lin was immediately in shambles.

Chapter 202 - Talent Level Up (5)

Chapter 202: Talent Level Up (5)

Sure enough, Lilith was not as warm as he imagined. He still had to repay that debt in the future, but at the very least, Xiao Lin managed to save 3,500 New Dollars for the time being.

After leaving the trans-spatial communication room, Xiao Lin went straight back to the dormitory. The method he got was so simple yet so unexpected. He was quite stunned when he looked at the soft halo around the flawless diamond. It was not that he did not believe Lilith's words; it was just a pity that a beautiful work of art would have to be broken.

Xiao Lin curled his lips and put that strange thought behind him. He then raised the dagger in his hand and slashed it toward the surface of the diamond. After a sharp metallic crash, Xiao Lin actually bounced back and fell on the ground.

The diamond's density was beyond imagination. Xiao Lin smiled bitterly at the notch on the blade. The dagger was his first novice dagger and the evaluation was practically the lowest. He already had thoughts of changing the weapon early on, but then noticed some slight cracks on the surface of the diamond.

Its intensity still appeared to be within an acceptable range because Xiao Lin would have had a real headache on his hands if that were not the case. He had to consider the looming monthly exam before changing to another weapon, since his order was still with Lu Renjia and could not possibly be completed so soon.

"If that's the case, let's use Slashing!"

After ten minutes, Xiao Lin's room rumbled with rattles and thumps. With his Slashing at MAX, he was able to execute at least twice the level of damage, and coupled with Miracle's attribute transformation, the maximum destructive power Xiao Lin could inflict in that instance was actually quite significant.

Even so, Xiao Lin was out of breath, especially after the continuous use of his Miracle skill. When the attribute transformation state ended, the physical exertion was simply astonishing.

In the end, the diamond had reached its limit as Xiao Lin was flat on the ground. The first crack expanded rapidly, then extended to the entire surface of the diamond, causing it to shatter quietly. The fragments scattered all over the place, and to his surprise, the fluid-like substance inside the crystal evaporated rather quickly when it came into contact with the air, turning into a cloud of blue mist which filled every corner of the room in the blink of an eye.

The whole process took only a moment and Xiao Lin instinctively held his breath. The blue mist did not smell very good and had a faint mustiness, like food that had been expired for a very long time. Most notably, in the span of a few seconds, he felt his mind get a little dizzy and his whole body turned hot. The feeling of uneasiness grew.

The events that followed were even more bizarre. The mist seemed to be attracted to him, rushing quickly toward him. His body was like a magnet that frantically absorbed the mist.

"This thing isn't poisonous, right? Was I tricked?"

As soon as that thought came up, Xiao Lin felt his consciousness become more and more blurry, and he had a bad feeling in his heart. Although he did not believe that Lilith would lie to him, he was more willing to believe that there was something problematic about his body at that moment. Before he could run to the door to open it, he fell directly onto the carpet.

What Xiao Lin did not notice was a milky-white halo appeared suddenly on the surface of his skin after he had passed out. The halo quickly dimmed again but did not completely disappear. It turned into a very shallow film, covering Xiao Lin's body and greatly reducing the influx speed of the blue mist around him.

If the previous speed could be likened to crashing waves, the white halo had placed it under control and slowed the rate at which it entered his body to a gurgling stream. The blue mist's absorption time had also been greatly extended.

Xiao Lin felt like he was in a long, long dream. Within that dream was a world filled only with that white glow. His subconscious was familiar with that place, as if he had been to somewhere similar before, or rather, he had dreamt the same dream before.

He was the only person walking in that empty and quiet dream. He did not know where he was going and he could not even discern directions. He had no idea how long he had been walking, but he ended up exhausted. An apple tree suddenly appeared in the middle, abruptly appearing just like magic.

Xiao Lin rubbed his eyes vigorously. He was in disbelief, but an even more surprising sight existed behind the tree. A young man with brown curly hair and blue eyes was sitting under the apple tree. He was clearly not Chinese. With a smile, he looked at Xiao Lin and nodded, saying, "I've been waiting for you for a long time. This is a rare occasion. Come, sit down."

Xiao Lin was still dazed, so the man took the initiative to stand up and walk toward him. Even though it was only a dream, Xiao Lin's subconscious vigilance prompted him to retreat a few quick steps back, distancing himself from the man.

The man waved his hand helplessly and said, "Don't be nervous. Your subconscious mind is too tense. This will influence the effect of your talent advancement, and come to think of it, you are quite reckless. SS-level talents are different from ordinary talents. They are unique. Each SS-level talent can only exist once, yet you actually took over and used someone else's advanced capabilities."

"You mean the list is fake? And the blue mist is poisonous!"

The man laughed and shook his head. "Of course not. With that kind of energy component, your list is probably the same as what I used back then... That aside, thank me. I've already helped you tweak the energy component and allowed you to fully absorb it so your talents can be raised to its peak. It'll take a while, so in the meantime, you can chat with me here first."

"Who are you? And, this, where is this?" Xiao Lin was surprised.

"Haven't we met? Your subconscious forgets things so quickly. As for this place? This is the depths of consciousness. You can call it a dream, if you'd like."

"So, it is a dream." A dreaming person might not realize that they were dreaming, but Xiao Lin did not seem too startled as he stared at the man in front of him and asked, "Well, you haven't answered my first question. Who are you and what are you doing in my dream!"

“Ah, haven’t I introduced myself yet? That’s impossible.” The man was surprised, but he had an even bigger smile on his face. He said, with a playful tone, “You’ve probably guessed the answer by now. My name is Ivan. Ivanovich.”

Xiao Lin’s pupils contracted at once and he suddenly remembered why that bright white world was so familiar. He was not dreaming when he was at the area of Ivan’s alleged tomb in The Final Land; in fact, he had actually entered the very same place deep in his consciousness!

Chapter 203 - Goodbye Ivan

Ivanovich was, without a doubt, an extremely important figure in Planet Norma’s history of human colonization. He was also a very mysterious figure. Xiao Lin heard legends of that man from various people when in New Washington, and to top it off, he and Lilith found the place of Ivan’s alleged tomb in The Final Land.

Xiao Lin had no opinion on the impression he had of that legendary person, but one thing was certain: he definitely did not want to meet Ivan alone, let alone have any conflict with him. Regardless of what stand Ivan took, endless trouble was but a certainty.

That was due to the stark difference in the two individuals’ states, which could be likened to a deity’s and a mortal’s. Xiao Lin knew very well that he was currently still too weak, and he did not want to cause any possible trouble to himself.

“So, you’re not dead? The last time you snuck into my consciousness was in The Final Land. Did you take that opportunity to return to the New World? What’s your purpose?” Xiao Lin’s tone became more and more sullen as he fired a rapid barrage of questions.

Ivan was briefly startled before laughing heartily. “You’re really funny. If anyone else were in your position right now, they’d be more than eager to talk to me. Am I that unwelcome?”

Xiao Lin rolled his eyes angrily. “This is my dream! It’s my world! You came in without my permission. Am I supposed to thank you!”

Ivan was slightly taken aback. He smiled. “You’re right, but I’ll pay rent. When you wake up, you’ll discover just how perfect your talents are. Besides, you were learning skills a few days ago, weren’t you? Hmm, let me think about what skill that was. Phantom Steps? Don’t you think you’re progressing a bit too fast?”

“You’re the cause! Wait, no that’s impossible. This is my own, umm...” Xiao Lin obviously did not believe it. He wanted to say that it the effects were due to his SS-level talent, but on second thought, such secrets should not be revealed so recklessly.

Ivan immediately helped him finish his sentence. “Were you about to say that it’s because of the talent’s increased efficiency? That’s true, but don’t forget that you drank a very magical potion some days ago. Had it not been for my help in assisting you thoroughly absorb the ingredients of that potion, did you think it would have had such an amazing effect?”

“Training potion? You helped me to absorb it? I don’t quite understand.”

“It’s a very powerful potion. Although some people have proposed ideas about it in my time, no one had actually succeeded. I didn’t expect Dawn Academy to really be able to develop it.” Ivan sighed before the conversation took a different turn. “There aren’t any problems with the potion’s ingredients, but the developer is ignoring a big problem. Normal people would find it difficult to absorb such an agent, while those with talent can absorb it a little more, but not completely either. Without my help, you can only absorb about one-tenth of the effect of an agent like that.”

Xiao Lin suddenly had a realization. Although he did not express it verbally, he actually believed Ivan’s words somewhat. In fact, there were some amazing training effects in recent days, so much so that it confounded him a little.

After all, it only took him a week to train Phantom Steps to the fullest level. Such speed was almost faster than riding atop a rocket. He originally thought that all of it was due to the qualitative change effected by his Academic Genius talent as well as the training potion, but even Fei Yawen—the potion’s creator—was similarly amazed by the potion’s amazing effects. No experiment subject seemed to have reached that kind of level before.

Seeing Xiao Lin’s silence, Ivan narrowed his smile slightly. “You believe now, don’t you? I come without any ill intent. Why would I want to help you otherwise? You ought to know that, even though these things were a simple task for me in the past, I now have to pay a high price if I wanted to do them.”

Xiao Lin relaxed a little after acknowledging that Ivan was not going to do anything to him for the time being. Ivan seemed to have immediately sensed the same, and the big smile reappeared on his youthful face. He snapped his fingers and two cans of Coke immediately dropped from above. He tossed one to Xiao Lin, then opened his own and took a few sips. He frowned for a moment, then snapped his fingers again.

With that, the apple tree beside him became stronger, with luxuriant branches and leaves that practically covered the entire sky. A lush grassland appeared under the tree and a faint fragrance could even be vaguely perceived.

An amazed Xiao Lin suddenly blurted out, “Is that your Creation ability?”

“Yes. It’s a pity that I can only use it only to this extent.”

“I’m curious. What state are you in now? If you’re not dead, you could’ve left when I arrived in New Washington.”

Ivan was somewhat reticent. He quietly drank his Coke and casually threw the can away. It disappeared into thin air and he smiled slightly. “It’s a pity. I’m dead. I died a long time ago. I know what you want to say, but it’s difficult for me to explain my current state in just a few words. The point is, I’m not a ghost. If you insist on an explanation, you can call me a memory.”

“A memory? You’re saying that what I’m seeing right now is just a memory!”

“Yes. You could understand it that way. I’m only the fragment of a memory.” The expression on Ivan’s face was very sad.

The two of them were quiet for a while. Xiao Lin did not know what to say, as all his previous assumptions about Ivan had been clarified. Ivan really was long dead, as history said. Xiao Lin had no idea how to comfort the memory of a dead person, so he could only choose to stay silent.

After a long time, Xiao Lin deliberated before asking, “Then why are you helping me?”

“I want you to do me a favor.”

Sure enough, there was no free lunch in the world. Ivan was lending Xiao Lin a helping hand, speeding up the latter’s skill learning and talent advancement. How could he not ask for anything in return?

The sympathy that had just appeared in Xiao Lin was completely set aside. He had his guard up and interrupted Ivan vigilantly, “You don’t even need to think about it! Whatever the favor is, I won’t do it! You’ve got to be kidding me! What makes you think I can do something that even you can’t accomplish?”

Ivan said helplessly again, “Are you really so reluctant to help a dead man fulfil his last wish?”

“Please! Last wishes are for people who are going to die. You’re just a memory! And since you’re able to manifest using that memory, why don’t you just go and do it yourself? Or find someone who’s stronger? I’m just a freshman! I’m not even Black Iron-rank yet!” Xiao Lin did not even want to listen to Ivan’s request. His instinct was to distance himself from the whirlpool of potential trouble.

“You’re the only person I can seek out because you happened to be there at the time. I believe this was God’s plan!” Ivan stood up and approached Xiao Lin. He remarked seriously, “Xiao Lin, when you left The Final Land, it signified that you’ve absorbed part of the Book of Creation’s fragments. There’s no way for you to refuse!”

Chapter 204 - Talent Level Up Ends

Chapter 204: Talent Level Up Ends

Xiao Lin felt a headache coming on. He did not even know what the Book of Creation was, let alone its so-called fragments. He never saw anything like that at all!

“You must really want to know what the Book of Creation is, don’t you?” Ivan saw the profound confusion on Xiao Lin’s face.

“Can you explain it to me?”

“Unfortunately, I don’t know what the Book of Creation is.”

“This isn’t funny. So, how many fragments are there in the Book of Creation?”

“I don’t know.”

“Where are the pieces?”

“I don’t know.”

“Is there a benefit to collecting all the pieces? For example, the ability to ascend to a higher level?”

“I don’t know.”

“Then what do you know...”

Ivan sighed. “I told you, I’m only a fragmented memory. All I know is that the Book of Creation relates to the origin and laws of Planet Norma. However, the book was destroyed a long time ago and its fragments are scattered all over time and space. One of the fragments is hidden in The Final Land; in my tomb, that is. In fact, this memory of mine is also to protect that fragment. When I dive into your deep consciousness, it also means that this fragment has been absorbed by you.”

Xiao Lin could already feel a headache. He quickly waved his hand to interrupt. “The problem is, you don’t know a single thing at all. How do you expect me to collect all those fragments? And, how do I know if this thing will bring harm? I don’t want to stir up trouble!”

Ivan shook his head. “I may not know, but the information in my memory shows that the Book of Creation is very important to Planet Norma, even Earth! In fact, if it’s possible, I would’ve loved to task this to a more capable person, but unfortunately, it was you who entered that place, and it was you who understood the message I burned on the crystal wall. For that reason, it can only be you.”

After a pause, Ivan blinked and smiled softly. “As for the harm? Haha, I’ll borrow one of your Chinese sayings: you’re taking your own undeserved gain for granted. Aren’t you curious how the Miracle skill you created came to be? I’ve been paying attention to you in The Final Land. While it’s true that laws can be created there, you couldn’t have been able to create your new skill without the book’s fragments, even with that SS-level talent! I obtained a fragment back then too, and that was why I was able to create the resurrection law.”

Xiao Lin was indeed quite surprised, but on closer thought, the statements put forth were the only possibility. His Miracle skill did appear rather abruptly, as if a mere thought was able to transform it into a skill.

However, Xiao Lin was more concerned about Ivan’s other statement. “You said that the Book of Creation is also important to Earth? But isn’t it from Planet Norma?”

Ivan spread his palms. “You’d have to find the answer yourself. I told you, my task is to protect the fragment. Now that the fragment has a new owner, my mission is complete.”

Looking at the bright, carefree smile on the young Russian’s face, Xiao Lin guessed something and asked quickly, “Are you going to leave? Or is it—”

“I’m just a memory. I’m not even a soul. Back in The Final Land, I used a special method to seal myself in the fragment. Now that there is no fragment, normal law dictates that memories without a body will fade away quickly. Such is the law of nature,” Ivan said calmly. He did not feel the slightest regret at his impending disappearance.

Regardless of Xiao Lin's earlier views and beliefs toward that legendary character, he could not help but feel sad when he heard that.

Whether it was the Miracle skill, the accelerated learning of Phantom Steps, or supposed assistance to help Xiao Lin improve his talent level, the memory of Ivan—whom he did not know personally—really did help him a lot.

After a brief moment of conflict, Xiao Lin hesitated and said, "I don't dare give you any assurances or promises regarding the Book of Creation's fragments, but if strength and conditions permit, I'll try to help you collect them."

Ivan waved his hand and said disapprovingly, "It's okay. This isn't an order. It's just a request. The onus on agreeing actually lies with you, but the information in my memory shows that it seems to have a great impact on Earth. Although I'm just a memory, I still don't want any disasters to happen in my homeworld. I hope you can understand."

Xiao Lin nodded to express his understanding, despite the fact that he was still puzzled.

Just as those last words were explained, Ivan stood under the apple tree and continued, "My time is running out. I'll help you complete your transition to SS-level. Oh, about that, it's a very complicated and time-consuming upgrade. I don't have time to explain more to you, but I'll help you this time. You'll have to find out more on your own in the future."

After finishing his words, Ivan closed his eyes before waiting for Xiao Lin to respond. Ivan's body then became increasingly transparent and blurry. After disappearing completely, the entire light-filled world seemed to have lost its anchor and crumbled in an instant.

Xiao Lin's consciousness fell into chaos again—in layman's terms, he had passed out.

When Xiao Lin next woke up, he felt that every bone in his body was sore, but aside from that pain was an unexplainable freshness in his spirit. He stood up with great effort and used the wall as support, then discovered that his clothes were soaked all over. He sweated profusely, and there was also some kind of thick, stinking, unknown gray-black substance sticking to his clothes.

Xiao Lin looked outside the window. Darkness had already covered the sky and he breathed a sigh of relief when he lowered his head to glance at the time on the computer display. It was still the evening of the same day and he was fortunate not to have been stuck in a coma for days on end.

After rushing into the bathroom, he took a very pleasant shower and completely cleaned off all the strange stickiness on his body. When he came out again, he was fully refreshed and his bone pain had lessened. Then he logged into his personal file and checked his own talent attributes: it was a confidential piece of information that only he could access.

[Talent: Academic Genius LV2 (self-named)]

[Level: SS]

[Passive effect: Improve learning efficiency by 200%.]

[Active effect: Replication ability to replicate any non-talent skill that does not exceed the Grade E evaluation. Effect lasts 10 minutes, and the skill can be used every 6 days.]

His SS-level skill was finally upgraded, and the effect after the upgrade was tremendously powerful. The passive effect had doubled by 100%, and he was more than eager to see the 200% training result after initially experiencing the initial passive effects.

Xiao Lin's active replication skill had also been strengthened. The cool-down period after using it had been reduced from the initial seven days to six days. Although it was only a one-day difference, it was still better than nothing. The replication effect duration had also been extended from three minutes to ten minutes, and most importantly, the grade of skills he could replicate rose from F to E.

Chapter 205 - Dragon Blood

Chapter 205: Dragon Blood

The pleasant surprise could not have been achieved without Ivan's help. Even though the latter was just a memory that had dissipated along with the wind, Xiao Lin could only silently say a word of thanks in his heart.

As for the Book of Creation, every other piece of information was practically absent aside from its name. Although Ivan said that there was a fragment in his body and that he had mastered the Creation skill's Miracle, Xiao Lin did not plan to take any proactive actions, let alone reveal anything to others. It would all be left to fate.

It was less than a week before the third monthly exam. Xiao Lin could feel the increasingly tight schedule and he did not have any time to spare after raising his talent level. There was still one last chance to use his Replicate skill, and it was better to use it the very next day. That way, the cool-down period would end just as the monthly exam started.

Xiao Lin's target of replication had been decided very early on. He looked for Song Junlang the next day. Ever since returning from New Washington, the logistics department's head had practically spent his days without ever leaving home. He carefully tended to the little dragon-eagle every day.

The logistics department resembled a back garden that Xiao Lin could enter and leave at will. When he passed by that time, he discovered that the little dragon-eagle had grown a little bit bigger again. He could not help but complain, "The little guy is growing a bit too fast!"

By then, Song Junlang was also accustomed to Xiao Lin's sudden appearance. He spoke without turning back, "It's not that quick under normal circumstances, but I added a little special ingredient to its food. Would you like to try?"

Xiao Lin's eyes twitched. "Thank you, but I'm not interested. Department Head Song, can you show me your sword aura?"

After finishing what he was doing, Song Junlang looked up strangely. “You came to me and asked about that last time. I’m pretty sure I’ve told you that I haven’t used it for a long time. Plus, I’m busy now.”

“Just do me a favor please,” Xiao Lin quickly pleaded. If he wanted to master the external sword aura as soon as possible in the remaining few days, he could only do so by replicating Song Junlang’s skills. Of course, he did not mention his skill and instead used the excuse that he was practicing sword aura and needed the help of a master to show him the works.

“Well, I can help you, but in return, you have to do me a little favor too,” the helpless Song Junlang said very reluctantly only after Xiao Lin pestered him.

Xiao Lin nodded happily and agreed, but quickly added, “But I will never eat whatever strange ingredient you just mentioned.”

“Don’t worry, I definitely won’t ask you to. How could I trick you!” Seeing Xiao Lin agree, Song Junlang immediately beamed with joy and hurried to the next room to get something.

Left alone, Xiao Lin grew more and more anxious. Song Junlang’s expression did not seem too promising. He had the same look and tone when he lied to him about eating the iron comb chicken before.

Song Junlang came back soon enough and held a glass in his hand. The glass was filled with a red viscous substance, and there were bubbles too. The red substance seemed to be fresh off the stove and there was a dash of golden yellow liquid mixed in too.

Xiao Lin stepped back warily when the smell of rust crashed into his face. Although he had no idea what was in the cup, his face had an expression that said, ‘Don’t even think you can trick me into drinking it.’

“Come on, drink it while it’s hot!”

“Fat chance!”

“Tsk ts. This is some good stuff right here. I wouldn’t just give it to anyone. I’m only giving it to you on account of our good friendship.”

“Since it’s that good, why don’t you drink it yourself?”

“How could I? What if I endanger my life by drinking it?”

“F*CK YOU! So, its fine if something happens to me, then?”

“Ah, I misspoke. You’re the only person who is able to drink this without anything happening. It’s actually made specifically for you. You ought to know that you’re very special and I can assure you there won’t be any danger. After all, where else can I find a better experimental subject...ahh, I mean a kinder friend than you?”

Those profound words stunned Xiao Lin a little. As soon as he was about to ask why, Song Junlang had already thrust the glass and forcibly held it to his mouth. It looked as though Song Junlang was going to pour it down his throat.

“You! Hold up! Tell me what this is!”

“It’s dragon blood. Told you it’s rare good stuff.”

Xiao Lin was not a newbie anymore. He was aware that pure dragons were a rarity, even on Planet Norma. There were many half-dragon creatures such as dragon-eagles that possessed some dragon blood in them.

A real dragon could be regarded as a true treasure. Their body parts were very useful, from every scale to all their internal organs and blood. High-level forging, alchemy, or magic scrolls required many of those materials. Even though dragons were often extremely powerful, there were far more dragon-slayers on Planet Norma.

If the viscous substance in that glass really was dragon blood, then true to Song Junlang’s word, it was a rare and precious substance. After a brief moment of hesitation, Song Junlang had already seized the moment and poured the cup of dragon blood into his mouth.

Dragon blood did not taste good at all. Aside from the rust-like taste and smell, it also smelled of rot. The temperature was very high too, nearly burning his lips when they came into contact with him. However, it had a somewhat cooling sensation when it reached his stomach.

Xiao Lin coughed nonstop after nearing choking on it. He quickly grabbed the cup and drank it slowly by himself, asking, “You could’ve just said it was dragon blood earlier. How did you get such a precious thing though?”

“You’d have to thank this little guy.” Song Junlang pointed to the dragon-eagle locked inside the cage. He said proudly, “I purified its blood repeatedly and added some special materials to get real dragon blood. Don’t underestimate this little cup you’re drinking. I’ll have you know during these few days, the amount of blood I had to extract from this guy is probably enough to fill a bucket!”

Having said that, he also felt a little helpless. “That’s why I had to use special methods to accelerate its growth, otherwise it’ll die from such a huge amount of bloodletting.”

“There aren’t any side effects, right?”

“Uh, no. I think.”

“You think?”

“There’s nothing I can do. I’ve never drank such high-end stuff before. It’s difficult for ordinary people to digest dragon blood, but you’re different. I told you, you’re special.” Song Junlang’s eyes had an eager gaze. “I’ve recorded all your experimental data from previous occasions. To be honest, your ability to absorb the special effects of these hybrid creatures is astonishing! In fact, you’re not the only one I’ve experimented on all these years, but you’re the only one who actually managed to reach this point!”

Xiao Lin breathed a sigh of relief. He thought that Song Junlang had guessed the presence of his SS-level talent. It turned out to be about experimental data.

“Now that I’ve finished drinking the dragon blood, you can demonstrate your sword aura.” Xiao Lin was obviously not going to forget the true purpose of his visit.

Chapter 206 - Elemental Sword Aura

Chapter 206: Elemental Sword Aura

Xiao Lin knew very little about Song Junlang’s past—only that the latter was a rather well-known genius whose strength once reached Gold-rank eight years ago. However, it fell to Bronze-rank after being defeated in a later battle and had yet to show any signs of improving.

Perhaps Song Junlang was deliberately avoiding that past of his and refrained from mentioning it in front of Xiao Lin. Under Xiao Lin’s repeated requests, Department Head Song held the sword again and remained silent for some time.

Xiao Lin noticed the slight change in Song Junlang’s eyes. It was no longer the usual laid-back laziness and was instead replaced by a very focused and dignified demeanor. Xiao Lin also noticed that Song Junlang’s sword was a little strange.

It was to be expected, since that was the first time he laid eyes on Song Junlang’s weapon. After all, the impression that the head of logistics left on Xiao Lin was that of a man who constantly played with his hybrid species.

Song Junlang’s sword was very worn out. The rust-stained blade had long lost its luster, and the edges had many gaps. What left Xiao Lin most speechless was that the sword tip was obviously broken. Regardless of how he looked at it, the sword seemed to have been taken out from a garbage dump.

Song Junlang suddenly executed a move. He did so in a very slow manner, raising the sword and swinging it down. Each movement could be seen with clarity. What followed was the sound of howling wind. Xiao Lin was just about to poke fun at the broken sword when he immediately focused his attention.

It appeared to be the most basic Slashing action in Basic Swordsmanship, but the sound of wind and air friction in Xiao Lin’s ears grew increasingly harsher. After less than half a second, a small tree more than 10 meters away was sliced off at the trunk and fell over, with the neat gap fully displaying the sword’s power.

Xiao Lin instinctively took a few steps back and activated his replication skill without hesitation.

[Replication target: Song Junlang. Replication activated; scanning commenced...]

[Skill: Elementary Elemental Sword Aura (MAX), skill rating E+]

[Replication complete!]

Xiao Lin had already drawn out his shortsword. Ten minutes was not a lot of time. First thing he did was close his eyes and quickly go through the elemental sword aura methods that kept surging into his mind. Replication was indeed a very intriguing ability. Rather than being a pure copy of the skill, it also included the skill experience of the person being replicated.

The increased use of replication allowed him to be more and more aware of his talent. Although simple copying was effective at critical moments, its practical use was still quite limited. Experience was much more important compared to 10 minutes of using that skill.

Although Song Junlang was only Bronze-rank as of then, he had once reached Gold-rank in the past, and an experience like that was not something that any ordinary person possessed.

Xiao Lin slowly raised his shortsword, but did not immediately brandish it. He was finally able to understand everything after going through Song Junlang's valuable experience.

Elemental sword aura, that is, external sword aura, was where a person used their sword to directly guide the worldly elements to form sword aura. It was the use of such external forces that lent it the name external sword aura.

It was not difficult to understand such a definition, but the tricky part was the guiding process. It was also the key reason why external sword aura was more difficult to get started with than internal sword aura. The guiding process had to be based on basic meditation in order to integrate one's sword aura with the elements. In turn, that would eventually result in a sword move.

The process was very slow at first. After Song Junlang gave his demonstration, he stopped to watch. He knew that Xiao Lin was trying to comprehend everything and did not bother him.

Xiao Lin held up his sword for several minutes and finally opened his eyes again. There was a profoundly, enlightened look in his eyes and he finally swung the sword down. There was a rush of force cutting through the air and sailing far. A few seconds later, the small tree that had been cut into two sections by Song Junlang had another scar, but the difference was also very obvious. Although it was still waist-length, the scar was uneven.

Xiao Lin looked at Song Junlang, befuddled. The latter shrugged and explained out of the blue, "It's control. Although I'm surprised that you're able to use this powerful sword technique, all elemental sword techniques require a high degree of control. Otherwise, its power would be greatly reduced upon execution."

Xiao Lin was obviously a little disheartened with that move. Compared to internal sword aura that required only physical strength, external sword aura consumed both physical and mental strength. Despite being able to replicate Department Head Song's Elementary Elemental Swordsmanship, his basic attributes would not increase too much because of it, though the consumption of energy was still quite alarming for him.

Although Song Junlang was not someone who ordinarily attended to his proper duties, he was really good at giving pointers for elemental swordsmanship. He walked to the little tree, touched the gap, and after thinking for a while, said, "Your elemental affinity with wind is too low. Elemental swordsmanship is actually quite difficult to practice. Although it's not technique dual

cultivation, elemental swordsmanship does require a certain level of basic meditation and elemental affinity as a support to better exert its power. Frankly speaking, most people who practice elemental swordsmanship are purely looking to torture themselves.”

“But you learnt it too...”

“I used to be a genius, after all.”

“It feels really weird when you say that about yourself.”

Xiao Lin chided him slightly. In fact, it was the T-rex who told him that there were many restrictions for external sword aura, though it had the huge advantage of being very powerful. During the early stages, its power could be said to internal sword aura of the same level.

However, the biggest drawback of magic-martial art dual cultivation could be unequivocally seen in elemental sword aura. After the initial strong phase, the progress would be much slower as one advanced, since it relied on the support of basic meditation and elemental affinity. The T-rex probably switched to internal sword aura during that time because she reached a bottleneck in elemental sword aura.

Song Junlang also told him that the peak period of elemental sword aura was probably around the Silver-rank, after which inner sword aura would practically trump it.

Although Dawn Academy did not force students to choose between internal and external sword aura, the tutors generally recommended students choose internal sword aura first.

Song Junlang spoke in a rather serious tone when it came to that. “The reason I was able to maintain my peak when I reached Gold-rank was because of the support provided by my talent. It’s only suitable for elemental sword aura.”

He did not specify what talent, but Xiao Lin was a little surprised by it. After some careful thought, the bottleneck of elemental sword aura was actually the difficulty of balancing both meditation and swordsmanship. However, after the upgrade of his Academic Talent skill, the learning efficiency increased by 200% and could fully support the continued cultivation of elemental sword aura.

After the ten minutes of copying, Xiao Lin and Song Junlang talked a lot about elemental sword aura. In that respect, Department Head Song was obviously more of a professional than his teacher.

As the subject of their conversation deepened, Xiao Lin also gradually developed some curiosity about Song Junlang’s past. When he once again brought up the topic as to why Department Head Song suddenly lost his strength, the man’s smile instantly froze.

After a long silence, his face returned to that tired look again. He yawned, and said indifferently, “It’s getting late. You should head back.”

Chapter 207 - Elemental Floating Fish

Chapter 207: Elemental Floating Fish

Xiao Lin could distinctly make out that Song Junlang was politely ushering him away. He did not expect Song Junlang to be so secretive about the past and apologized with a wry smile.

After Xiao Lin left, Song Junlang stared at the broken sword in his hand in a daze, then suddenly muttered, “Being young is such a blessing!”

He threw the sword into the corner after making that remark and eagerly immersed himself in the study of his little dragon-eagle. A few minutes later, he seemed to remember something. He touched his chin and muttered to himself, “Speaking of which, that kid’s ability to absorb dragon blood is really surprising. I’m surprised it hasn’t produced any side effects up until now? Should I tell him about the side effects... You know what, forget it. It’s not like he’ll die.”

Although it was a pity that he had not been able to continue to learn elemental swordsmanship from Department Head Song, Xiao Lin was satisfied with the gains he got that day. More importantly, the results displayed by the central computer after summoning his personal attributes came as a surprise to him.

His Elemental Swordsmanship had reached LV1 mastery, which was according to his expectations, since it was not the first time he used the replication skill to step into the threshold of learning a particular ability. In addition, Xiao Lin found that all his attributes had increased by two points: as of then, he had Strength 12, Agility 14, Intelligence 14, Constitution 14.

He had not done any training that day, so the only possibility was the dragon blood that Department Head Song had given him. According to him, the dragon blood had been diluted countless times before given to Xiao Lin to drink, but the effects were rather amazing. The addition of two points for each totaled to eight points overall.

A normal person would have to have trained hard for at least a month if they wanted to achieve the same effect. Even Xiao Lin and his Academic Genius talent would have needed more than half a month to improve his efficiency.

“Dragon blood really is amazing!”

Xiao Lin was overwhelmed with emotion. If not for the fact that Song Junlang valued the little dragon-eagle so much, he felt that he had the urge to sneak into the logistics department, cook that dragon-eagle into a stew, then gobbled it all up.

Two more passive skills were listed as mastered.

Elementary Vitality: Dragon blood accelerates your blood flow, giving you more vitality and bestowing a certain self-healing ability for minor wounds.

Elementary Magic Resistance: Dragons have strong resistance to elemental magic. Dragon blood gives you the first level of magic resistance. You have 20% resistance to F- rated elemental spells, and 10% resistance against E rated spells.

Those two passive effects were far more practical compared to the eight-point increase in his attributes. Professor Dai once said in class that, even though the dragon race was at the top of Planet Norma's biological chain, there were still countless people who went forth to slay dragons with seemingly no concern for their own lives.

However, Xiao Lin was a little puzzled; how was it possible that such beneficial dragon blood had no side effects at all? Song Junlang's place left a deep impression on him. Although his various hybrid species had extraordinary effects, the side effects were extremely unbearable for Xiao Lin.

On that occasion, he did not seem to feel any discomfort.

"Maybe Department Head Song grew a conscience and finally developed an experimental product without any side effects!"

Xiao Lin was very encouraged after coming to that conclusion and went to the logistics department more diligently in the next couple of days. Since Department Head Song had mentioned the issue of elemental affinity earlier, Xiao Lin's thoughts perked up and he wondered if he could use external means to achieve quicker results.

Unfortunately, Department Head Song answered to the negative. Elemental affinity had to be continuously strengthened through his own perception of the elements. It was impossible to achieve through any other means. However, Song Junlang also took the opportunity to launch his brand-new diet therapy—the elemental floating fish.

Within the special fishing pond in the Logistics Department, Xiao Lin saw a fish that only appeared in a few areas of Planet Norma. Although it was called a fish, it was nothing but another name given by people from Earth. Strictly speaking, it was not a fish, nor did it live in water.

The appearance of the elemental floating fish was very similar to that of a fish. It had a very long tailfin and had short limbs, though they were clearly regressed because of prolonged unuse. Its body was translucent, and a light-blue blood-like fluid flowed within its body.

As the name suggested, the fish floated in mid-air because it fed on the elements in the air. Their habitat was very similarly unique and could only be found in areas with very rich elements, such as the spiritually-charged elven territory, or near craters with high density of fire elements.

Song Junlang's fishing grounds were also specially made. There was no water, only special energy conduits that were used to continuously extract elements and ensure optimum concentration of the surrounding elements.

Those elemental floating fish were not hybrids with Earth's species, as floating fish were a very diverse species on Planet Norma. Song Junlang used methods such as controlling element density to continuously optimize the rearing of the species, reducing it to a level where the floating fish's power could be absorbed by people below Black Iron-rank.

In his words, such elemental floating fish could be described as a natural tonic and was very helpful in increasing mental power. Song Junlang waved and said boldly, "Stay here tonight and have some fish soup with me! I'll be the chef!"

Xiao Lin had never eaten Song Junlang's cooking because the previous few dietary therapy sessions were practically whipped up by himself. With curiosity and anticipation, he had dinner at the logistics department that evening, since the student union president had lifted the restriction on being back at the dormitory by 7pm.

The taste of the fish soup was surprisingly delicious. Xiao Lin was sweating all over as he ate and did not notice that Song Junlang never even touched his chopsticks throughout the meal. After he cleaned his plate, he realized that something was amiss and a violent pain soon surfaced from his stomach. It gurgled incessantly, as if something was constantly rolling in the body.

Song Junlang seemed rather prepared for everything. He took out a bottle of medicine and said worryingly, "Hurry up and take this medicine. It'll make you feel much better."

"What medicine is this?"

"Instant diarrhea relief."

"How would I know if you're lying to me again! I don't want to eat this food!" Xiao Lin was filled with righteous indignation. The heat in his belly tumbled even more severely and he glared at Song Junlang before darting straight into the toilet.

However, that was only the beginning of a tragedy. When Xiao Lin wobbled out of the toilet after losing count of how many times he went in, he finally could not take it anymore and gritted his teeth while asking Song Junlang for the instant diarrhea relief. He said angrily, "Did you know all along this was going to happen?"

Song Junlang did not sit idly during that period. Whenever Xiao Lin came out of the toilet, he asked detailed questions about how the latter felt. He then glanced at the clock and buried his head in his notebook to record various data.

Chapter 208 - Identifying the Elements

Chapter 208: Identifying the Elements

Faced with Xiao Lin's aggressive questioning, Song Junlang merely sighed and confessed unabashedly. He then asked in a very concerned manner, "How are you feeling? What does your body feel right now? You said it was cold, then you said it was hot. So, is it cold or hot?"

Xiao Lin took the diarrhea medication and said in exasperation, "Don't even think about trying to get experimental data from me! Didn't you say that there wouldn't be any side effects?"

"I lied to you, of course." Department Head Song said matter-of-factly. He immediately switched the topic to the results of the experiment and said earnestly, "Don't interrupt, tell me how you're feeling right now. It's actually for your own good."

Xiao Lin was furious when he looked at Song Junlang's innocent expression. "Do you think I'd trust you again? What do you mean for my own good? It's obvious you're just collecting data!"

Song Junlang put down the pen and said in a very solemn tone, “You’ve been working extra hard to practice basic meditation and spells these few days, haven’t you? This experiment is very important for your training. If all goes well, you’ll achieve much more in the last few days.”

Xiao Lin was skeptical, but he had to admit that Song Junlang’s words were very attractive to him. He was somewhat sad to realize that he had gradually become a lab rat, but after a moment’s hesitation, he said, “It’s cold sometimes and hot sometimes. I can’t tell exactly what it feels like, but it’s probably both.”

Song Junlang was surprised and muttered about how interesting it was. He then buried his head and continued to jot everything down.

Xiao Lin could not help but ask, “Don’t just record everything. Tell me what conclusions you’ve made.”

“Well, I suggest you work harder on your affinity for water and fire in these couple of days. The effect is very good, but I don’t know to what extent. The floating fish’s internal elemental energy is abundant and can temporarily allow you to sense the elements much better.”

Xiao Lin was pleasantly surprised. “So, my elemental affinity will be greatly improved?”

“Uh, not exactly, because it’s only temporary. The special genetic structure of the elemental floating fish allows them to store energy, but our human body can’t do that. Drinking fish soup only temporarily strengthens your body’s ability to be more attuned to the elements, but like food that’s digested, this energy will flow away quickly.”

Song Junlang then said helplessly, “That is why I told you to eat the diarrhea medication. Your normal metabolism will speed up energy consumption, and in turn, means you have to speed up training. But it’s also very interesting when you think about it. You were able to feel cold and hot, which means that you have a high affinity for fire and water. This is really rare.”

Xiao Lin did not pay attention to the second half of the sentence. The first half sufficed for him to realize that the elemental floating fish soup had practically given him a temporarily heightened state, though that state would only decrease by the day. He hurriedly bid goodbye and went straight back to the dormitory. It was already night, and although he could continue to meditate in his room, the effect was not as good as being in the meditation room. He was already feeling much better after eating the diarrhea medication.

Xiao Lin’s Basic Meditation was still LV4. Practically all his time had been used to train swordsmanship earlier. With his initial mastery of elemental sword aura, his swordsmanship training was nearing its end. In the next few days, he intended to focus his time solely on spells and meditation.

He could see from the contents of Gu Xiaoyue’s notes in class a few days ago that Basic Meditation LV4 was actually a bottleneck. Meditation from LVO to LV4 was only the most basic introductory stage, the contents of which were also very simple. All that needed to be done was to perceive the existence of the four basic elements from scratch.

From LV4 onward, the basic meditation process was not solely to perceive the existence of elements, but also to distinguish the types of elements. From that stage on, everyone’s elemental

affinity gradually started to manifest. That was the most crucial part of learning spells, which was why the prerequisite for learning any spell was at least LV4 Basic Meditation.

Everyone's meditation realm was different. Xiao Lin's was a vast universe and, by then, he was already able to quickly enter his meditative state. The amalgamation of elements in the void seemed to dot the sky like stars. That was what he could perceive, but if he wanted to raise himself to greater heights, he had to recognize every single star there was.

The process was actually very difficult. Judging from the discussions in the forum, many people who took spell classes had been stagnant there for a very long time. A person's experience would not mindlessly increase just because they meditated—doing so using the wrong method would only be counterproductive.

From Gu Xiaoyue's notes, it was evident that she had no difficulty in distinguishing the elements. The same could be said of Chen Dao, Freshmen Class Twelve's acting monitor, who did not face a bottleneck. Xiao Lin could find out about all that simply by looking at everyone's mediation level.

In fact, Xiao Lin was no novice to meditation, as he started his basic meditation by copying a sophomore senior. In other words, he had previously succeeded in perceiving and distinguishing the elements. Even if the skills disappeared, such an experience would remain embedded in his mind.

Xiao Lin took only four hours—which was practically the entire night—to enter meditation and distinguish the element types. Though it seemed quite lengthy since he paled in comparison to Gu Xiaoyue's half hour and Chen Dao's one hour and 40 minutes; four hours was still an amazing feat if one took into account the fact that other people's bottleneck lasted one or two weeks.

The upgrading of perception and cognition was also very concretely manifested in the microcosm of the elements. For example, in Xiao Lin's meditation realm, the stars were no longer just fuzzy points of light, but burned with raging flames or glowed in blue-colored waves.

After opening his eyes, Xiao Lin immediately checked the level of basic meditation and found that his proficiency had indeed improved significantly. That showed that his direction was correct. The burning planet in his meditation realm was likely the fire element, while the blue planet had to be the water element. Song Junlang's hunch was right—Xiao Lin could easily perceive those two elements, and at the same time, found it difficult to sense wind or earth.

However, distinguishing the elements was only the first step, and simply perceiving them was meaningless. Next up, he had to master control over those elements, because utilizing them was the basic premise for casting spells.

Seeing that it was already late, Xiao Lin did not continue to meditate. His terrible bout of diarrhea earlier that evening, coupled with his lengthy period of meditation, had tired him out significantly.

Before he slept that night, he remembered to take another dose of the diarrhea medication. Song Junlang advised him not to continue taking it until the monthly exam, because the cause of diarrhea was due to his body's unfamiliarity with the sudden influx of elemental energy. In the same vein, the metabolism caused by his stomach's intense reaction would also accelerate the loss of energy.

Chapter 209 - Flame Bullet

Chapter 209: Flame Bullet

Five more days remained before the monthly exam arrived. In order to give the freshmen a sense of urgency, the academy set up a countdown on the homepage of the freshmen's forum. Whenever they logged into the forum, they would be met with the striking red string of numbers. The ticking down of time only increased everyone's anxiety.

Xiao Lin's meditation progressed rather smoothly, though he was unsure whether it was due to the effect of an advancement in his Academic Genius talent or the therapeutic effect of the elemental floating fish that Song Junlang gave to him. It took only two days for him to raise his basic meditation to LV5. In addition, he had also mastered the Basic Fire Element Affinity LV1 and Basic Water Element Affinity LV1.

Elemental affinity was a complement to meditation. The elemental affinity that each person had was different and highly dependent on their own talent as well as personal effort. For example, he could easily perceive the fire element in his meditation realm, so it was undoubtedly easier if he chose fire spells.

That was not to say that he could not choose other spells. It was feasible, but his affinity toward the other elements was too low, resulting in the need to spend several times the effort and time to actually learn them.

Therefore, the Lolita tutor strongly recommended that everyone chose their future learning path based on their own talents. Whichever element was easier to perceive would then determine the direction of their future study.

Four basic elements existed: wind, fire, water, and earth. In most cases, a person could only recognize one of them within their meditation realm. There were relatively few people like Xiao Lin who could sense two at the same time, and even fewer individuals who could sense more than two.

To be more precise, there was one person who had affinity for more than two elements within the entire freshman year—it was Gu Xiaoyue, who had an affinity for all four elements at the same time.

Xiao Lin had already subconsciously learnt how to ignore Gu Xiaoyue in that respect. Comparing oneself with others was a vain exercise, though his own situation was actually quite unique too.

Song Junlang later told him that having an affinity for two elements was actually normal, because the prerequisite for learning compound spells was mastery over multiple elements. Be that as it may, water and fire were incompatible. There was hardly any common ground between those two elements, which meant that there would be increased difficulty in learning them.

Xiao Lin felt that it would be a pity if he just gave up on them. Although he could also spend more time continuing to sense the wind element or the earth element, he could already foresee that he

did not have much talent for the affinity of those two elements. Spending more time on it might not necessarily result in a favorable conclusion.

He planned to proceed with what he had, at least for the time being, since the monthly exam was approaching.

Then came the learning of spells. The first thing Xiao Lin thought of was the Flame Bullet skill book that he brought back from New Washington. Those skill books given to him by the bookstore owner at New Washington were tossed to the corner of his room and nearly forgotten, since he had yet to reach the conditions required to learn them.

The learning conditions for Flame Bullet was Fire Element Affinity LV1 and Basic Meditation LV4. Xiao Lin just so happened to have met those conditions. Instead of working on his meditation level or element affinity in the final few days, it was better for him to master two skills first. That was the best way forward.

The Flame Bullet was actually a personally tweaked skill. The original was Flame Ball, one of the most basic and common Black Iron-rank spells in the flame series.

As a flame spell, the power of the Flame Ball was quite high, reaching the E- rating along with a low probability of burn damage. Like many high-damage skills however, the Flame Ball's defects were evident, requiring high mental power. Individuals whose basic meditation and intelligence did not reach the standard generally had to rest after using three or five flame balls.

The improved version of the Flame Bullet was based on a considerable weakening of its spell-damage evaluation from E- to just F-. It was a reduction by three full levels, but the casting process had been greatly simplified as well. The annotations in the skill book stated that someone who is fully proficient in the spell could basically release a flame bullet in half a second without consuming a lot of mental power.

It was impossible to say which one was better when comparing those two spells. Seeing as the class was bound to collective cooperation with each other within the monthly exam's environment, it was likely that they would have to face many enemies. Xiao Lin therefore gave priority to the Flame Bullet as his number one spell to learn.

The second spell of his choice was the Water Shield, one of the most basic defensive skills of water element spells. In light of the fact that his custom-made leather armor was still somewhat low in terms of defensive ability, the Water Shield would be a good supplement.

Learning and mastering spells were a somewhat cumbersome process. In addition to the basic meditation and elemental affinity, it was equally important to understand a certain set of theoretical knowledge was also important. Simply put, it was the composition and arrangement of elements, all of which were explained in detail in the skill books.

The process of casting spells was actually through controlling the elements, then recombining them in a predetermined manner before finally creating a spell out of it. In Gu Xiaoyue's words, it was like computer programming.

Assistance might occasionally be needed in the process of casting spells, such as incantations, spellcasting actions, and even spellcasting materials. The so-called incantations or actions were

aimed at guiding the elements, so it was impossible for them to be rigid, since everyone might possess their own understanding of it.

Fortunately, the Fire Bullet and Water Shield were the most basic of spells and did not require such complicated processes. They could be completed using only simple casting actions.

The Water Shield was slightly more troublesome than the simpler Flame Bullet. By then, Xiao Lin had realized the advantages of the notebook: its owner had simplified the casting action of the Flame Bullet, making it much easier to master.

Xiao Lin spent nearly all his time on the spell. The high learning efficiency of the Academic Genius talent, coupled with Song Junlang's elemental floating fish, played a significant role.

In short, he finally mastered those two skills a day before the monthly exam. The speed with which he mastered them could be considered rather rapid indeed. Most people started learning their skills at the beginning of the month, and it took about half a month to master their very first spell.

With one day left to go, Xiao Lin had no plans to continue training, especially when he could not master any new skills in that time. He gave himself some time off and relaxed a little, since mental exhaustion was inevitable after his intense training over the past few days.

The final preparation before the exam came soon enough. Although no one knew the specific contents of the exam because of its confidential nature, a little bit of insider information from unknown sources began spreading all over the forum.

For example, it was said that the simulated scene in the upcoming exam was one of the smaller battles that took place in the war between Dawn Academy and the Orcs, of which the simulated time span would be relatively long.

Chapter 210 - Pre-Battle Preparations

Chapter 210: Pre-Battle Preparations

If that scoop was true, then it was certain to send some chills. Many people had been focusing on the exam, so when the insider news was revealed, nearly everyone participated in the forum discussion.

In any case, although the simulated scenarios of their monthly exam were derived from the past war, at the end of the day, they were only given a minor role due to the fact that they were freshmen.

For example, they only did reconnaissance in the first exam, while the second—which Xiao Lin did not take part in—was nothing more than an escape task.

It was easy to understand why. After all, they were merely freshmen who had just been in school for two months. Their basic attributes were poor and they had few skills, so the things they could do were very limited. Tasks such as escapes and reconnaissance that were most suitable for them.

However, the situation at that time was different. Perhaps the third monthly exam might turn out to be a direct simulation of a certain battle? What role would they be playing then?

No one knew the answer, and no one dared to say that the leaked news was false either.

By then, the academy had created a very solemn atmosphere to let everyone know the exam was going to be out of the norm. Some could not understand the reasons for that, while others were full of complaints. Since they were merely freshmen, could the academy really be setting up such a difficult exam just to deliberately make them lose their lives?

At the end of the day, all they could do was suck up their dissatisfaction. Dawn Academy's strict management system meant that they could not complain to anyone, other than making a couple of remarks on the forum. Who else could they complain to? A senior year leader? The head of a department? The student council president?

They were not Xiao Lin, for goodness sake. They probably never even had the chance to see those leading figures for a couple of months.

Finally, the day before the monthly exam arrived. On that day, the academy organized a basic-level Lifewater sale event for the freshman as scheduled. It was stipulated that only freshmen had the right to buy them, and students from other years were precluded from making any purchases.

Although it was a considerate act for the freshmen, some people viewed the student union's behavior as more terrifying than anything else. It sent a clear signal that the exam would be a difficult one for those freshmen to survive.

The equipment that Xiao Lin entrusted Lu Renjia to manufacture was also completed on schedule. He made a special trip to the third-year dormitory area and completed the transaction on the spot. The total value of the order was 5,000 redemption points, which included a Bronze-rank sword, a Black-Iron staff, and a set of Bronze leather armor.

[Holy Soul Sword: Bronze-rank, physical damage evaluation E, worth 2,000 redemption points.]

As a bronze-level weapon, the physical lethality of a E-rated weapon seemed very ordinary, and perhaps even paled in comparison to a few superbly made Black Iron-rank weapons. However, Lu Renjia's zealous marketing of the Holy Soul Sword actually aroused Xiao Lin's interest.

The Holy Soul Sword came with two abilities. The first was called Swordsmanship Tutelage. If the passive sword skill of the sword wielder was not higher than Grade E, the Holy Soul energy contained within the sword would have a direct effect on the wielder and raise their Basic Swordsmanship skill by two levels.

When Xiao Lin went to order the weapon, Lu Renjia mentioned that he had to make a tailor-made weapon. Before commencing any work, he specifically asked Xiao Lin about the latter's skill level in Basic Swordsmanship.

Xiao Lin's Basic Swordsmanship was at LV8, meaning it would reach LV10 if it was raised by two levels. That was already at MAX. Those two levels were not to be underestimated, because the change in his swordsmanship would be qualitative instead of quantitative after reaching LV10. Such an increase in combat effectiveness was quite remarkable.

Lu Renjia strongly recommended that weapon for that reason. If Xiao Lin's basic swordsmanship was not exactly at LV8, it would have been difficult for that weapon to exert its maximum effect.

The second ability was to summon the holy soul. Once enough blood stained the sword, it would temporarily activate the power of the soul within the gem, thus enabling a dead swordsman to briefly manifest and fight on behalf of Xiao Lin.

Lu Renjia said that the core material for making that sword was a gem he had accidentally obtained in the New World a year ago. The gem was said to be the manifested soul of a dead local indigenous swordsman who was obsessed with swordsmanship. Lu Renjia originally wanted to use it for his own weapon, but unfortunately the swordsman's rank was very low during his lifetime. The most Lu Renjia could do was cast it into a Bronze-rank weapon.

As a third-year student, Bronze-rank weapons were of no use to Lu Renjia. That gem had been sitting there since then, and it just so happened to be available to Xiao Lin that time.

Both auxiliary abilities were very practical, hence Xiao Lin's decision to accept the Holy Soul Sword.

[Peakfire Staff: Black Iron-rank staff, worth 1,000 redemption points.]

At the special request of Xiao Lin, the staff was made into a one-handed type. Magic staffs could generally be divided into two-handed and one-handed types. The former was larger and required more materials, but its effect was also much better. The advantage of a one-handed staff was its portable nature. It also appeared less heavy and cumbersome during battle.

The Peakfire Staff was rated F in its spell damage. Such an evaluation was nothing more than moderate, but the staff also had an auxiliary effect of causing burns. When using the staff to cast fire spells, the probability of burning an enemy would double!

The effect was yet another practical one for Xiao Lin. The Flame Bullet he had just learned was originally an improved spell that increased the casting speed at the cost of lethality. The power of the Flame Bullet itself actually came from burns, and the faster the casting speed, the higher the probability of burns. On that point, it was much better than the Flame Ball.

[Warbear Leather Armor: Bronze-rank armor with F-rated defense against spells and physical attacks. Its ability is an increase in fighting spirit that builds up gradually when worn. Once the body reaches its limit of exhaustion, all that power will be released, and the stored fighting spirit will fully restore the wearer's physical strength. Worth 2,000 redemption points.]

Although its defensive capability was a very meager Bronze-rank, the supplementary effect was quite nifty. It was made out of material obtained from a kind of bear called the warbear from Planet Norma.

Xiao Lin could see Lu Renjia's casting style through those weapons. Although they all seemed quite ordinary, most of them often had very practical uses.

In Lu Renjia's words, that was called equipment balance. Because of the many restrictions on materials and convenience, achieving a more powerful effect could only be done by reducing one's own ability. Otherwise, the imbalance would make the weapon difficult to successfully produce.

In any case, Xiao Lin was very satisfied with the guy's ability to manufacture weapons.

With 1,000 redemption points left, he chose to buy some healing potions and magic scrolls, but that amount of redemption points could only buy two scrolls and a few bottles of potions at most.

The expensiveness of the magic scroll came as a shock to Xiao Lin. A mere Black Iron-rank spell scroll was as expensive as 400 redemption points, and that was the cheap end of the range. If the quality was slightly better, it would reach at least 600 or 700 redemption points, and the magic scrolls were all consumables that were expendable after one use.

Chapter 211 - Instructor Participates

Chapter 211: Instructor Participates

Even though he knew the exams would be very difficult this time, Xiao Lin did not plan on continuing to waste his New Dollars on magical scrolls, as he felt it would not be worth it in the long run.

Xiao Lin did consider buying some Lifewater, but he still had more than enough lifespan, so it would not be a big deal even if he were to die once. However, he could not resist calling Gu Xiaoyue to remind her to buy some for herself. After a long time nagging her, she just grunted in acknowledgment before hanging up.

Xiao Lin was still worried after that, and when they stopped selling Lifewater, he deliberately looked at Gu Xiaoyue's lifespan information. When he noticed that her lifespan still displayed as two years, he could not believe how angry he got.

Was that woman really so confident that she would be able to survive every exam?

Xiao Lin even thought to himself in frustration that, if Gu Xiaoyue did not treasure her own life, he should not bother either.

With that fire in his heart, the day of the third monthly examination arrived.

The examination started at eight in the morning during the weekend as usual. The unexpected thing was, they did not release the exam information beforehand this time. During the last two examinations, the instructors would give them information regarding the examinations, such as the tasks and map. That was something only new students got, and once they entered the second year it stopped.

However, this time they did not even get that privilege; it seemed like that academy really wanted them to experience a realistic battle, not minding if the new students might have to pay with their lifespans.

Xiao Lin woke up early that day, but a great number of other students woke up even earlier, which was mostly due to them not being able to sleep well. After breakfast, he readied himself in his room, putting on his equipment before hurrying to the classroom.

Almost everyone was already there when he reached the classroom. Everyone was a lot more tense this time compared to the other two examinations. Everyone was quiet. Even the usually excitable Wang Dalin was just whispering to someone else in discussion.

Xiao Lin's appearance attracted quite a few gazes, and someone remarked, "Monitor, we're counting on you."

"Yeah, I'll definitely follow you later!"

Xiao Lin gaped; he did not expect so many people to be relying on him when he usually kept such a low profile. Upon closer inspection, they were all students who followed him during the first examination. Xiao Lin had left a deep impression on them then. Even though they could only complete the basic task that time, it was not an exaggeration to say they only left the examination alive because of Xiao Lin.

During Xiao Lin's month-long stay in New Washington, their favorable impressions should have normally subsided, but Class Seven ended up with terrible results in the relatively easy second examination.

The difference was very telling, so they could not help but think of Xiao Lin. Compared to anyone else, those students naturally preferred to put their faith on Xiao Lin.

The rest of the students were more fluid. They did not care who would be the leader, but when they saw that Xiao Lin had willing followers, they followed suit. A small portion of students coldly smiled to themselves, not voicing any objections, but not agreeing either.

Instructor Qin Chuan arrived somewhat late, and Xiao Lin could not help but feel like he had not seen him for quite some time. Xiao Lin was the only one who felt that way. While he was away from Dawn Academy, most of Class Seven's tasks fell onto Qin Chuan, but it was mainly just related to notifying the students about any announcements from school, since Qin Chuan was not a monitor.

However, looking at how the man was dressed, Xiao Lin was visibly surprised. The instructors were in charge of communicating to the students before the examinations, and if all went to plan, that would be the last time Qin Chuan would be their instructor.

That was because according to the school regulations, an instructor's duty was just to give guidance to the students during the first three months of their time at the academy. After those three months, the official class monitors would be chosen, and all tasks would be assumed by them.

Everyone knew that fact, but that day was quite strange. Qin Chuan had a full suit of steel armor on when he walked in, with two large swords on his back, and a silver helmet on his head. His footsteps were loud as he walked, attracting every student to look at him with a surprised gaze.

"Instructor, why are you dressed like that?" someone asked curiously.

Qin Chuan looked at everyone before calmly saying something which caused everyone a great deal of shock, "The student union has decided that the instructors would be participating in this examination with all of you!"

After a short moment of silence, the entire classroom erupted. There was finally a shocking piece of news that snapped everyone out of their thoughts about the examination.

The instructor taking part in the examinations was actually not unheard of. Dawn Academy had adopted this practice some time ago, but it was abolished after just a few years. That was because the academy felt that instructors were way too strong for examinations meant for new students.

However, if they increased the difficulty level because of that, then the new students would naturally have a higher chance of dying. In the end, the academy decided to abolish that practice in favor of making the examinations easier.

That rule was already done away with a century ago. They had heard about it before in history class, which was why it was not a foreign concept to them. The problem was, Dawn Academy actually reinstated the practice just for this examination.

Xiao Lin let out a sigh, looking at Gu Xiaoyue who sat next to him before bitterly saying, “If I’m not mistaken, instructors are usually seniors that have at least completed their first year of study. No matter how weak they are, they would still be much stronger than us. Even students with talents might not be able to compete. Now I’m really curious, how difficult is this examination that even the instructors need to participate? Is the academy really that worried that the death rate will be too high?”

Gu Xiaoyue’s face was calm, not even lifting her head up before softly saying, “No matter how difficult it is, I will still win.”

“You really are confident. Is that why you still refuse to buy Lifewater?” Xiao Lin sighed. That was still something that weighed on him, but he was already past the point of giving any advice. All he could do was hope that the examination would go smoothly.

Chapter 212 - Battle on The Beach

Chapter 212: Battle on The Beach

After that, the information related to the examination was given out. Indeed, the academy did have the information prepared, but it was obvious why they only gave it to everyone at that moment. They did not want the students to have enough time to prepare.

The armored instructor, Qin Chuan, handed out the information, which was only two to three pages. He had a sour look on his face the entire time, very obviously displeased at being notified at the last minute.

However, everyone quickly understood that there was another reason Qin Chuan was displeased. After giving out the information, Qin Chuan left one copy to himself before saying somberly, “There’s only a little more than ten minutes until the examination. I’ll brief you first. This time, the whole class is a squad. Since the scenario is Dawn Academy’s war with the orcs this time, the simulation will be conducted as if all of you are in the army. Remember this, the moment the examination starts, you are all no longer normal students, but soldiers!”

The leak on the forums earlier was actually true; the examination would be a simulation of war. However, a student curiously raised his hand. “Since we’re in an army, who is our leader?”

Everyone quickly realized that, if they were soldiers, they would definitely have a commanding officer. Once they remembered that the examination would play a pick part in choosing the official class monitor, they quickly surmised that other than personal skill, leadership ability would also be a criteria for class monitors as well.

With that in mind, everyone shifted their gazes toward Xiao Lin and Qin Chuan. If the instructor were not participating, then the commanding officer would definitely be Xiao Lin, but it was not as clear cut right now.

The instructor were seniors that had at least a year under their belt, so they were obviously a lot more skilled than everyone else. However, Qin Chuan quickly dispelled their thoughts, which also showed why he was unhappy as he entered the classroom.

“It’s all stated in the information, so give it a good read!” Qin Chuan shouted impatiently. He seemed to have realized that his tone was not the best, especially toward his teammates for the examination. He composed himself before adding, “The student union has decided that the acting class monitor will be the commanding officer, and the instructor will be the vice-commander.”

Xiao Lin quickly browsed through the information. On the first page, it was clearly stated that the student union had considered the unique nature of this examination as well as the fact that it was a simulation of war. That was why they decided that the acting class monitors would be the commanding officers the moment the simulation started, which would have them as a second lieutenant in order to give them the proper authority to lead.

It was important to note that the academies did not use the same simple hierarchy within the army of squads, squadrons, and brigades as the Normans did. As colonists from Earth, they maintained a modern approach to managing their armies, which even extended to the native troops within their territories.

Qin Chuan might have been named the assistant, but he was still below Xiao Lin, which surprised everyone. However, upon further deliberation, everyone felt that it was only natural. After finishing his duty as an instructor, Qin Chuan would just be a regular student, only separated by everyone else because he was at the academy for a year longer. Dawn Academy had never cared about seniority, only about skill.

Everyone had their attention on that particular matter for a moment, but there was only ten minutes left until the examination, so they quickly shifted their attention toward the information. After all, they were not going to be the commanding officer regardless. That fact did cause some discontent in some of them.

If their leadership skills were also going to be observed during this examination, then what could they do to stand out?

The second page had most of the important information, which was a general explanation of the examination. The examination was to be an amphibious assault. There was not a lot of exposition, but the contents were all meaningful.

The battle was fought during 101 N.C., which was the second year of the war against the orcs. They had studied the battle during their history lessons as well. That year, Dawn Academy had been at war with the merfolk for a long time. The main reason was that the orcs were giving a lot of support to the merfolk from the rear. In the end, Dawn Academy could not tolerate it anymore, and launched an assault against the orcs.

Based on the relative powers at that time, Dawn Academy had a huge advantage. The Law of Immortality had been recently established and resurrection towers had already been built in various spots within their territory, which pushed their advantage even further.

However, when the war started, Dawn Academy was somehow pulled into a long slog. They had originally planned on finishing the war within a year, but the war was much tougher than they anticipated. After a year, they not only failed to end the war, the orcs even got so aggressive that they sent a huge cavalry unit to assault the capital.

Just as New Washington was the capital of Judge Academy, Dawn City was their capital in the New World. It was the first city they established on Planet Norma, but it was close to being surrounded. Even if Dawn Academy did not prioritize the war before, the orcish troops managed to put everyone on high alert.

In order to break the siege on Dawn City, the academy had sent a small squad out by sea, evading the orcish troops in order to attack a supply depot the orcs had set up in the middle. According to investigations, the depot was a key part in their supply chain, and if it was taken, it would not only ensure the orcish cavalry would quickly run out of supplies, it would also completely stop any chance of reinforcements from them.

That was the general scenario of the examination. Their role within the simulation was definitely the small squad that was sent to attack the supply depot.

It was drastically different from escaping pursuit or scouting. Based on the information, the mission was a very important part of the war. Everyone suddenly started to tense up, but they were excited at the same time. Even if they knew everything was a simulation, they were still excited to participate in something that would go down in history.

Xiao Lin was still fixated on the information, a strange expression on his face. The background information was very detailed, but it lacked an important piece of information.

They did not mention if Dawn Academy succeeded or failed that mission all those years ago.

Chapter 213 - Task Start

Chapter 213: Task Start

Objectives

1. Successfully pull off the amphibious assault. Once the orc encampment is taken over, everyone will obtain 500 points and 10 credits. The reward will be given to the entire class. Even if one were to die, as long as the task is completed, the reward will still be given.

2. After securing the depot, the orcish troops will launch a counterattack. In that period, do everything possible to defend the position. The counter will start from the point the depot is secured, and for every day it is held, 20 points will be awarded to everyone. If the depot is held for over a month, 20 credits will be awarded. This task will only reward those that are alive. Once the student dies or the orcish troops take over the depot, the counter will stop.
3. The final task of the battle. Hold the position until Dawn City sends reinforcements. Once the reinforcements arrive, all tasks will be completed. 2000 points and 40 credits will be awarded to all surviving students, as well as one Bronze-rank equipment of their choice.

The tasks remained at three, but there were no optional or mandatory objectives this time. It was basically set according to the flow of the entire battle, and as long as one did not die, they would only have to hold on until the end for all the rewards.

Looking at the objectives, the students began to whisper among themselves. Setting aside the objectives, the rewards were extremely lucrative this time.

Based on the earlier examinations, the academy was usually quite conservative with their rewards. Even if one completed every task in the examination, they would usually only get enough to buy a bottle of elementary Lifewater.

However, this time the academy was extremely generous. The first task would net you an eye-catching 500 hundred points, and they did not even need to be alive to get it. That meant almost everyone would be able to get that reward. After all, based on past experience, the first task was often the easiest, which meant it was likely to be accomplished.

The second task was extremely irregular. It was obvious the examination would be extremely difficult just from the fact that it offered rewards based on time. It was hard not to cry at the fact, but as long as they managed to hold on for a month, they would be very well-off after the examination.

The third task was also extremely lucrative. The fact that they would get to pick a Bronze-rank equipment for themselves was an extremely rare chance.

“Wow, the academy must have noticed we were so poor that we couldn’t even afford Lifewater. The rewards are outrageous this time,” someone joked.

“I actually feel like the academy knows a lot of us will die in the examination, so it would be fine even if the rewards are high, since dead people won’t be able to get the last two rewards,” someone else lamented.

This examination would surely overshadow all their prior experiences. Just as everyone was talking about the lucrative rewards, Xiao Lin already had his eyes on the last page of information. He noticed that a map was not provided, unlike last time.

The last page had a very simple statement, but Xiao Lin’s eyes widened when he saw it. He could not help but gasp before slowly reading everything out loud. “In consideration of the fact that the examination is a large-scale battle, even though the academy has adjusted the variables accordingly, the number of students in each class still differs greatly. Therefore, the academy has decided that this examination will be a joint battle for the entire year!”

They actually threw all twelve classes into the same battlefield this time, but Xiao Lin found it to be the logical choice upon closer inspection. The average number of students in each class was around fifty to sixty. For the prior examinations, the numbers were quite normal. However, in a war, those were quite pitiful numbers.

The objectives had also clearly stated that they needed to hold onto the depot against the orc army after they took it over. With their numbers, it was impossible to defend it, let alone for an entire month.

However, if it was the entire year, there would be around eight hundred of them. Even though it was still a small number in war terms, the background information did state that Dawn Academy could only send a small squad thanks to the siege by the orcs. Therefore, it was quite a realistic scenario.

Xiao Lin looked up to the ceiling, sighing to himself. He did not know if that decision would really be beneficial to them. Logically, if the difficulty did not change, their greater numbers would naturally be a boon.

However, even within their own class, they were not completely comfortable with each other. If twelve other classes were added into the mix, would infighting eventually break out?

Everyone else finally noticed the last part as well, and a lot of questions started to arise. Before they could properly decide if they should be happy with it or not, Qin Chuan told everyone the examination was about to start.

The moment the clock struck eight, rays of white light descended from the ceiling, enveloping everyone within it. Everyone's bodies started to dim, eventually disappearing into the light. The academy obviously did not want to give them too much time to think, probably wanting them to figure out their problems within the simulation itself.

When he opened his eyes, Xiao Lin was already lying on a large wooden warship. He looked around and saw a huge wave over ten meters tall heading toward them. He immediately found the nearest thing he could grab and held on for dear life. His heart pumped as he felt the ship swaying wildly in the waves. Sea water was all over the deck, even flowing straight onto the ship itself. Everyone, even those who had yet to fully materialize from the academy, were completely wet.

After the waves settled, Xiao Lin could finally get a good look at his surroundings. Among the violent waves, he spotted over ten warships moving along.

It was not the first time he was on a ship, but it was definitely the first time he was on a wooden one in the middle of the violent ocean.

Xiao Lin was struggling to get up when the ocean conjured up another wave, so he could only miserably fall down again, holding on to the pole next to him for dear life.

In that sinister environment, something finally happened to that ill-prepared squad. It did not take long for Xiao Lin to hear someone shouting frantically from the head of the ship, "Oh no! Someone fell into the sea! Stop the ship! Quickly stop the ship!"

Chapter 214 - Interim Group Leader

Chapter 214: Interim Group Leader

The cries for help were quickly drowned by the sounds of the crashing waves. The deck was full of people, including crew members frantically trying to stabilize the ship. In that chaotic scene, no one cared about who fell into the sea.

In just that short time, the warship had already moved quite a distance. Xiao Lin turned back to look at the sea, but should not find any trace of a person. He opened his mouth, but finally sighed in resignation.

The person who fell in could only count himself unlucky. They had already been eliminated from the monthly examination. There was no way the warship would stop to save someone, and in these violent waves, the ones alive on the ship might even be dragged down with that person if they tried.

From the moment they opened their eyes, they had basically crossed eras and entered the realm of this simulated war. Even if it was cruel, Xiao Lin could only pray that that unlucky person still had enough left in his lifespan.

The waves only started to die down in the evening. The dark sky started to clear, causing everyone to breathe a sigh of relief after suffering for a half a day. They could not help but collapse on the deck, which was filled with the smell of seawater and was extremely wet. Everyone was lying down on the deck in complete exhaustion, not even having the strength to speak.

Xiao Lin was exhausted as well, but as the acting class monitor, as well as the commanding officer for the examination, he had a lot to do. The constant swaying earlier had made him very dizzy, but the sea was relatively calm at the moment, so he cleared his throat and shouted, "Class Seven, let's report first. Get our numbers sorted out!"

Xiao Lin looked around, and even though he could not remember the names of most of them, he could still recognize practically every face. It was clear that the ship was filled with his classmates, so he had to determine how many of them had fallen into the choppy waters.

After a brief silence, everyone exchanged looks with some apprehension. Some of them, such as Wang Dalin, even shut their eyes, pretending not to hear Xiao Lin. Even though this was a team-oriented examination, and Xiao Lin had obtained command from the academy, the fact that some people wanted to make things hard by causing trouble did not change.

There was only one class monitor. If the academy decided that Xiao Lin was unworthy of being one after the final evaluation, then one of them could very well be chosen.

"One!" someone shouted from nearby. Xiao Lin looked over, and he smiled.

The first one to report was Zhou Feng. The bald and muscle-bound man was currently drenched, revealing his scar-ridden body and the tattoo on his back, causing him to look very menacing.

Xiao Lin was quite familiar with the man. During the first examination, he had saved the man from a desert iguana, which caused Zhou Feng to be quite loyal to him, probably as thanks to his savior.

“Two.” A clear voice followed closely; it was Gu Xiaoyue’s.

“Three.”

“Four.”

Following Zhou Feng and Gu Xiaoyue, the other classmates slowly started to report in. That was especially true when Xiao Lin looked at Zhou Feng and Gu Xiaoyue happily, saying, “I looked at the information earlier, and as the commanding officer, I have the authority to appoint lower-ranking officers. So, let’s do it this way: the class monitors have the right to choose group leaders later on. I’ll just do it here. Zhou Feng and Gu Xiaoyue, until you die in this monthly examination, the two of you are interim group leaders!”

“Interim group leaders?” someone exclaimed.

Xiao Lin heard that and added, “If nothing goes wrong, after this examination, the ‘interim’ will be taken away!”

It was as if a fire had been lit in everyone’s eyes. The academy operated on a strict hierarchy; it was something everyone felt in the three months they had been there. A few of them immediately had some thoughts of their own. They knew they could definitely not become a class monitor, year leader, or any official position of that sort.

However, group leaders were different. As the lowest possible official, the class monitors could appoint them as they wished. How would the class monitors appoint their group leaders? Was it by skill or by obedience?

The answer was obvious, so everyone started to get a bit more spirited. Only a few remaining students lied on the floor pretending to be dead. However, the deck was not that big, so those who did not report were quickly found, attracting countless looks.

Wang Dalin was green in the face. He did not expect that Xiao Lin would use his group leader position to so easily persuade everyone. If that plan went so smoothly, Xiao Lin’s leadership abilities would definitely shine in that examination, unlike the first one where a lot of them refused to listen.

Even if they were not willing, the last few students finally relented. They did not want to isolate themselves from the rest of the class right as the examination started, especially since it was a group examination.

There were a total of 57 people, which meant three of them had fallen into the sea. Their identities were also quickly verified. Two women and a man. Only a few of their closer friends were sad, but after verifying that they still had plenty of lifespan left, Xiao Lin let out a breath of relief.

“Where is the instructor?” someone asked.

Xiao Lin had forgotten about that, but he could not see Qin Chuan at all. Just as he was about to search, Qin Chuan walked over from within the ship with a middle-aged man with a large beard. The two of them chatted as they walked, and when they reached Xiao Lin, he introduced, “This is the captain of the ship.

Xiao Lin gaped when he saw how well the two of them seemed to get along. He cursed inwardly. It was obvious that Qin Chuan had gained the captain’s favor. Qin Chuan was the vice-captain in this task. The academy probably wanted the experienced instructors to help their class monitors with the arrangement, but would the instructors really be willing to submit to their junior?

Looking closer at the ship captain, his skin was extremely dark, probably thanks to being at sea so much. Xiao Lin’s gaze quickly stopped at his shoulder, where two stripes and a star were clearly seen. He knew that the academies used modern army ranks, so that man was probably a major.

Chapter 215 - Peace Offering From The Instructor

Chapter 215: Peace Offering From The Instructor

“Major.” Xiao Lin thought for a while before using that form of address.

However, the captain seemed to be an easygoing man. He nodded as he smiled, “I’m Song, so you just call me Captain Song. We’ve already crossed the most dangerous parts of the Endless Sea. The rest of the journey will be calmer, so you should have your people use this time to rest. We will begin the assault at dawn tomorrow.

He did not think it would be so soon, so Xiao Lin was surprised, but he did not reveal it. He nodded and asked, “About the assault, do you have any plans for it?”

“Let’s discuss it in detail in my quarters.”

“Then allow me to get my team in order first.”

After the captain left, Xiao Lin started to let the others know. Since the assault would begin at dawn, then time was of the essence. Everyone was extremely fatigued, and lying on the deck facing the sun and winds did not help them recover.

After that, Xiao Lin managed to get someone to prepare a meal for everyone, as well as arrange temporary accommodations. The crew members were likely NPCs, and were quite friendly at that. Since the amphibious assault was meant to break the siege on Dawn City, the crew likely knew how important their tasks were as well.

Everything was progressing quite smoothly, and after filling his stomach with everyone else, Xiao Lin got them to take the time to rest before turning to Qin Chuan. “Instructor, shall we look for the captain?”

He was not sure how strong Qin Chuan was, but as someone who had been at Dawn Academy for a year, he would definitely be stronger than new students, so Xiao Lin adjusted his tone accordingly. As the commanding officer, he did not plan on using his status to push Qin Chuan. After all, his strength was needed in the following battles. However, when he just entered the academy, Qin Chuan did not look kindly upon him, so the two of them were not that friendly with each other.

Qin Chuan wiped his mouth. The food on the ship was not that good, so he was obviously not too satisfied. After some consideration, he waited for the rest of the students to leave before saying, "The student union notified the instructors. The rewards for this examination apply to us as well. I only have 50 credits left for me to enter the second year. Since being an instructor means I get extra credits, I actually only need 30 more."

Xiao Lin paused, before smiling in understanding as he offered his hand. "Relax, we will definitely get more than 30 credits in this examination."

Xiao Lin had been worried that Qin Chuan would go against him, or even make things hard for him on purpose. He was troubled over how that could be handled, but now he could relax. Qin Chuan's words were a peace offering to him, indicating that Qin Chuan was not interested in taking command. All he needed was the credits to get to the next year.

30 credits were not too hard to obtain. The first task would already get them 10 credits, and as long as they could hold on for more than a month for the second task, the 30 credits would be firmly in their grasp.

After that, the two of them finally had no reservations, and could have a proper discussion.

"I counted 15 different warships just now, but we only have 12 classes. If every class has their own ship, what are the other ships for?"

"Probably resource and emergency ships. After all, we'll need to defend the area for quite a long time." Qin Chuan said after some deliberation. He then lowered his voice, "Xiao Lin, I don't know how confident you are with this examination, and I'm not too familiar with the history from this period, but I know something very clearly. In actual history, this operation failed!"

Xiao Lin widened his eyes. When the results of the battle did not appear on the examination information, he already had his doubts, but after Qin Chuan's confirmation, his heart sank. After thinking, he said, "Don't let the others know about this."

"Relax, I know what to do."

"Do you know what failed in the operation? Was it the amphibious assault? Or did they capture the depot and end up letting the orcs take it back so quickly?" Xiao Lin wanted to get some more details to aid in their plans.

Qin Chuan hesitated. "I only know a little, but this battle ended in a massive defeat back then. Almost everyone who participated ended up dying, and the survival rate was less than 1%. The academy's higher-ups felt it a great humiliation, so they decided to downplay this battle after the war. That is why not many people know of the exact details nowadays."

Even though he had mentally prepared himself, Xiao Lin could not help but frown at the answer. It was no longer a question of difficulty; he did not feel like these new students would be able to compete with those operatives back then both in terms of skill and in terms of intelligence. Was this examination doomed to fail?

Qin Chuan found the topic quite depressing, especially since the task had not even started. He hurriedly said, "Let's just go discuss our next step with the captain first."

Xiao Lin was quite troubled. He understood why Qin Chuan came up to him willingly. On one hand, Qin Chuan probably felt like he alone would not be enough to handle the examination. On the other hand, Qin Chuan probably did not want to be responsible for failing the task by undermining the commanding officer. If they all really did die in the end, the students would definitely be enraged at the loss of 10 years of their lifespan, and that rage would definitely fall on their leader.

In his quarters, Captain Song was looking at the map on the table, deep in thought. When he saw the two of them enter, he got straight to the point, pointing at a red cross on the map, saying, "According to the plan, we'll be landing on this area, and the supply depot is right on the hill next to it."

"Any information on our enemies?" Xiao Lin asked.

"A small number of orc foot soldiers, there might be wolf cavalry, but definitely not a lot. Most of their main forces are on the way to attack Dawn City. The depot is in merfolk territory, so they will likely be our main opponents this time." Captain Song gave a detailed explanation of the information they had scouted beforehand.

Hearing that, Xiao Lin and Qin Chuan let out a sigh of relief. Even though they had never faced actual merfolk, but as Dawn Academy's old adversaries, the history books were full of information about them.

To put it simply, the race was weak, very weak, extremely weak!

If their opponents were going to be merfolk, then the resistance against their assault would be greatly diminished. That was the first piece of good news Xiao Lin had heard.

Chapter 216 - Preparations Before The Battle

Chapter 216: Preparations Before The Battle

After that, the three of them had detailed discussions about the overall situation. It was more or less just Captain Song reporting the situation to Xiao Lin and Qin Chuan. That was because most of the scouting had been done through sea due to the siege on land by the orc's wolf cavalry.

"Will the crew be giving us any assistance when we begin our assault?" Xiao Lin suddenly asked.

“We will provide long-range assistance, but we can’t stay for too long. Once you take over the depot, we will have to leave immediately.”

“Why?” Xiao Lin hurriedly asked. He knew that even if they took over the supply depot, they would still be facing a counterattack from the orcs. That fierce race was much stronger than the merfolk, so the situation would be very difficult without help from the warships.

Captain Song smiled bitterly, “Even though our warships look very large, we are regretfully not the strongest on the Endless Sea. The orcs might not have naval troops, they have a good relationship with the naga race. If the nagas were to be nearby, my entire fleet would be wiped out. I definitely cannot afford that loss, and neither can the academy!”

Xiao Lin finally understood. Basically, the responsibility would completely fall on them after the amphibious assault. Their backs would be against the sea, and they would face assault from three sides. It would be quite a desperate stand.

“How long will it take for Dawn City’s reinforcements to arrive once we take down the depot?”

Captain Song explained, “Your goal this time is to force the orc cavalry brigade to retreat. According to our reports, they carry very few supplies with them. They even need to provide food for their wolf mounts. Those things might be fiercer than regular mounts, but they take up a lot of resources. They basically need to eat meat every day to maintain top form. Furthermore, winter is about to start, so there won’t be a lot of animals for them to hunt. At the most, the cavalry brigade will only be able to last for two to three months.”

“As long as the supply depot remains in our hands for that period of time, then the orc cavalry will definitely need to retreat. When that time comes, Dawn City will march their troops out. They won’t just help you defend the depot, you will be able to pincer them and completely rout the orcs!”

That was basically Captain Song’s, no, the entire Dawn Academy’s strategy. With the current situation, that was the best chance they had to turn the tables. However, Qin Chuan had revealed that the mission had failed in actual history. Xiao Lin determined that the failure could not have happened during the initial assault, since they were up against merfolks with the support of the warships.

Therefore, they definitely failed during the counterattack from the orcs, With that in mind, Captain Song’s words did not give Xiao Lin too much comfort.

No matter what, as a complete simulation of the actual war back then, Xiao Lin had no way of changing the current war strategy, only to try his best to complete the given tasks.

After leaving the captain’s quarters, he chatted with Qin Chuan for a bit. The two of them failed to make much headway planning for the following day’s assault. Even Qin Chuan lacked experience in that department.

As the commanding officer of their team, Xiao Lin was basically a military officer, so he managed to get some special treatment. The rest of the students were all crammed into narrow rooms, with eight students per room and two students per bed. The rooms were also very damp, and the beds moldy.

The students struggled to sleep, used to the five-star hotel standards within the student dormitories. On top of that, they were filled with anxiety and anticipation for the assault that was going to start at dawn, so most of them were huddled together, chatting away instead of sleeping.

Xiao Lin was instead treated much better. He had a personal bedroom prepared for himself. Even though the conditions were quite average, it was still relatively cleaner.

However, after he was left alone, Xiao Lin found Gu Xiaoyue standing on the decks staring out at the sea. Xiao Lin decided to give his room to her. Even though Gu Xiaoyue was usually stubborn and strong-willed, she still preferred things immaculate. She was quite surprised when Xiao Lin offered, and opened her mouth to reject him.

However, Xiao Lin was too experienced to give her the chance. He immediately turned around and left after he spoke, leaving Gu Xiaoyue hanging. It took awhile before she muttered a word of thanks into the air.

Xiao Lin did not hear Gu Xiaoyue's gratitude, having already reached the area where the normal students were located. He selectively conveyed the information that he had gathered to everyone, trying to keep their spirits up. He mentioned that they were going to face the weak merfolk, and the wolf cavalry was basically not going to appear. He then told them if they managed to hold on for over a month, the orcs could possibly retreat, allowing them to easily complete their mission.

Qin Chuan arrived shortly after Xiao Lin, but he took a step back when he heard Xiao Lin discussing with the others. He had wanted to do exactly what Xiao Lin was doing. After all, after numerous examinations, he knew that, regardless of the difficulty, morale and spirit was extremely important. Otherwise, they could very possibly fail to even capture the supply depot tomorrow.

Even though he had never held any sort of official position in his entire life, let alone command anyone else, his years of being a guild leader in his games caused him to quickly pick up the necessary skills to lead his class.

Xiao Lin had already assigned two interim group leaders at that moment: Zhou Feng and Gu Xiaoyue. No one had any reservations of the two of them. Gu Xiaoyue's skills needed no introduction. In terms of magic, no one was her equal. As for Zhou Feng, even though his skills were not particularly noteworthy, he had still performed quite admirably in the last two examinations, leaving quite a good impression on everyone else.

He was reluctant to pick a third group leader at that moment, so all he did was split the students into groups, since he likely would not have the time to do that after they hit land.

Xiao Lin had actually looked for pen and paper to do that, first recording everyone's name alongside their skills and specialization, such as if they were specialized in magic, melee combat, or archery. Even though he had access to that information normally as a monitor, he only remembered a small portion of them.

Splitting them up into groups was not as simple as randomly distributing them into equal numbers. As someone who was a raid leader in his games, Xiao Lin clearly understood how important splitting them into the proper roles were.

Class Seven's distribution in combat specialization was quite unbalanced. Out of the 57 of them still left alive, 40 of them were close combatants, with 16 of them long-range specialists. Out of those 16, only six of them were training in magic.

Xiao Lin was the last one that was unaccounted for, but he was a dual-cultivator, so he did not really fit anywhere.

Chapter 217 - Landfall (1)

Chapter 217: Landfall (1)

Xiao Lin separated the close- and long-ranged combatants equally into each group, reminding them all to listen to the commands of the group leaders. When the time came, communications would be relayed by their hierarchies.

Of course, Xiao Lin could not ignore the possibility that his orders would be ignored. He was actually quite disappointed that Wang Dalin did not fall into the sea that night, but that man had at least held back recently, not publicly trying to cause trouble.

Xiao Lin did not know how to deal with the few dissenters. They were still part of Class Seven in name, but if they were to cause trouble when the time came, he did not mind cutting them off.

He was definitely not going to be able to get much sleep that night thanks to the swaying ship and the damp room. Xiao Lin instead decided to look for Captain Song for more information. It was only until he made sure that nothing could possibly happen to them on their way to shore did he finally relax, checking his gear once again before sleeping. Xiao Lin was actually quite anxious himself, but as the monitor, he felt that he could not afford to show it.

When dawn finally came, the sea was still a blanket of darkness as dark clouds obscured the sky. The weather constantly changed, but Captain Song was quite happy when he saw that. He told Xiao Lin there was no way the nagas would come under those weather conditions, so he was confident that their assault would not be interfered with.

After rousing everyone from their sleep, their spirits left much to be desired. Most of them were yawning constantly, obviously not having slept well.

Xiao Lin then observed the state of everyone's equipment, which comforted him quite a bit. After realizing this examination would be extremely difficult, no one had bothered saving their redemption points, having spent everything on equipment and items, but obviously the grades were not of too high rank.

Comparatively, Xiao Lin's Bronze-ranked Warbear Leather Armor was extremely eye-catching, and the jewels on his Holy Soul Sword caused everyone to stare with envy.

They had yet to learn how to determine the quality of any given equipment, but they at least understood that embedding magical items into gear would cause it to perform exceptionally better, and the price would obviously increase accordingly.

Xiao Lin had attracted practically everyone's attention, and he noticed that their looks of unease were somewhat calmed. As the commanding officer, his skill was definitely pivotal to everyone else's confidence, which was something Xiao Lin did not anticipate.

The weather conditions did nothing to help their eyesight, but they already started to make out faint traces of land on the horizon. However, even Xiao Lin could not make out what was happening on the beach.

"Do you have a telescope?" Xiao Lin asked the captain who was approaching.

"Telescope?" Captain Song asked in surprise.

Xiao Lin felt that he must have said something wrong, but he could not figure out what. Thankfully, Captain Song did not seem to mind, passing Xiao Lin a scroll as he shook his head, "We usually use this over here, a magical scroll that has both eagle vision and long-distance sight; it's much more useful on Planet Norma.

Unfurling the scroll caused the magic contained within to activate. Xiao Lin suddenly felt a warmth in his eyes, and everything started to brighten. His eyes felt like they had binoculars fixed onto them, and he could even make out the rocks that were on the shore.

On the shoreline, a few merfolk were patrolling the area, but they did not have magical scrolls, and the warships were still quite a distance away, so they did not notice the fleet approaching.

"It looks like we're quite lucky; their defenses are way too thin. No, it seems like they have practically no defenses! Ah, these low-lives underestimate us!" Captain Song was pleasantly surprised, but he could not help but feel like the merfolk were underestimating Dawn Academy by way too much.

Captain Song decided that they would be stopping there, since they might start running into difficulties if they moved any further. After that, landing crafts were prepared for Xiao Lin's team, he noticed the other warships were doing the same as well.

It was called a landing craft, but it was actually just a regular sampan. After that, a shield-like object with magical runes inscribed on it was placed at the head of the ship. That was used as a defense mechanism against long-range attacks, especially magical ones. The runes mainly were meant to reduce damage from fire-type spells. The sampans might not be too damaged from a few arrows, but a few flame spells could quickly sink them.

Each boat could seat around eight students, so a total of eight landing crafts were launched from the ship, and they needed to be rowed manually, causing some cursing from a few people, probably feeling like it was too much of a chore for a world filled with magic.

"Everyone shut up! Quit talking! After you reach shore, you will find your group leaders based on yesterday's allocations. After that, we split into two teams. Zhou Feng, your team will be in charge of clearing the merfolk on the shore and protecting everyone else. Gu Xiaoyue, you organize the long-range specialists and start firing at the supply depot."

“The supply depot is on top of the hill. What if the enemies start rushing down to attack us?” someone asked with concern. Amphibious assaults usually struggled to deal with enemies with the higher ground.

“Don’t worry. The warships will provide suppressing fire, especially on their archer towers.” With that, Xiao Lin paused, assessing the warship behind him. These types of wooden warships were already a thing of the past on Earth, but it was quite normal considering what era they were in.

The warships did not seem to have any type of cannons. He remembered Song Junlang had mentioned that Planet Norma’s research into gunpowder took very long before it had any results, so he was not expecting anything on that front. He might have consoled the others, but he could not help but worry himself. Was Captain Song planning on just having his crew shoot arrows or cast spells as support?

It was already too late to consider any of that. Following his command, everyone started to row their boats with the wooden paddles they were provided with. The landing crafts shot forward like rockets, quickly leaving the warships far behind them. At that moment, everyone gaped as they finally understood that they were not in a regular boat.

That speed was not something just rowing could normally achieve. Xiao Lin guessed that there was probably magic or equipment in the boat that was speeding them up, but it did make things a lot easier. The shore started to look clearer despite the darkness as they got closer.

With the closing of the distance, the merfolk on the shore also started to look clearer. Even though they had seen pictures of that race numerous times during their history classes, when they were finally faced with the real thing, everyone could not help but exclaim, “How ugly!”

Chapter 218 - Landfall (2)

Chapter 218: Landfall (2)

As an amphibious humanoid creature, merfolks looked like they had a fish’s head but a human’s body. They had large, yellow eyes, and skin that was covered in mucus and seaweed. Their large mouths were full of yellow and sharp teeth, and some unknown liquid seemed to be dripping from the corner of their mouths. They had small and muscular limbs. Thanks to the fact that their bodies had scales that were quite hard, they did not wear any armor, and only had weapons.

The merfolk race was extremely weak, and they initially had no way to produce their own weapons. They tended to use bones as their weapons, and even when they had better weapons, they were likely salvaged from sunken ships. However, ever since the orcs started to provide them with resources, the relative power of the merfolks started to rise.

All twelve classes, making up a total of eighty to ninety landing crafts, managed to silently close the distance to the beach at dawn. Xiao Lin had been worried that their enemies would start to launch long range attacks at them on the way, but it had been abnormally quiet throughout, so much so that he could not help but get suspicious.

According to the reports, it was supposed to be the largest supply depot for the orcish brigade. The supplies that were sent out from the depot comprised two-thirds of their whole supply chain. How could such an important location be so loosely protected?

However, he did not have too much time to deliberate. As they approached the shore, they suddenly heard a loud shout from atop the hill. Xiao Lin could not make out what language it was; it could have been either orcish or mermish, but that did not matter. Following that shout, other shouts could be heard throughout the shore.

The magical scroll that the captain gave to Xiao Lin was still in effect, so with his enhanced vision, he noticed there were suddenly a lot more merfolk on the beach. God knew where those ugly things came out from, but it was obvious they had been noticed.

Woosh! Woosh! Woosh!

A flurry of sounds was suddenly heard in the skies as a rain of arrows suddenly descended upon them. Following that, cries of misery could be heard among their ships, followed by splashes. It was not clear how many people had been shot into the seas.

It was not the time for hesitation; staying idle on the boats would just make them sitting ducks. Thanks to his enhanced vision, he determined that the majority of the arrows came from atop the hill.

Xiao Lin used his hand to try and gauge how deep the waters were. They were still a few dozen meters away from shore, but he immediately shouted, "The water isn't too deep here, everyone get down and charge for the shore!"

Immediately after saying that, he led the way by jumping in first. The cool water only reached his knees, but it was not the time to be fixated on the water temperature. Xiao Lin did not have any shields on him, nor was he sure if his armor could withstand the barrage of arrows.

Xiao Lin summoned all his strength and started to charge forward, his sword dancing around him. With his current level in Blocking, he was able to deflect some arrows away.

After jumping off the boat, everyone spread out and drew their weapons, greatly decreasing the chances that they would be hit. When the other classes saw what Class Seven was doing, they quickly dropped their hesitation and followed suit.

The amphibious assault was finally beginning.

A few hundred of them started to charge toward the shore, braving the arrow storm. At that time, the nearby warships finally started their attacks. Even as Xiao Lin's focus was on the shore, he turned around to look toward the warships. That was when he noticed streams of fire soar toward the air, landing on top of the hill, causing numerous explosions to be heard.

Everyone shouted and rallied, and Xiao Lin could clearly see that those flaming objects were not artileries, but a large arrow, probably fired by something like a ballista, accompanied with the magic of Planet Norma. That was probably the main means of attack from the warships.

The attack had tremendous impact, but seemed to require a long time to charge up. Xiao Lin noticed that, after they fired the first shot, the ship they had boarded was quiet for a long time. However, they had a great number of other warships firing as well, and the hill was quickly engulfed in flames.

With the long-range assault suppressed, their charge became much easier. After a few minutes, they finally engaged the merfolk on the beach. That was not their first battle, but some of the students could not help but be frightened. The merfolk looked extremely fierce, and charged at them with weapons in hand while shouting in mermish.

The merfolk mainly used blunt weapons, such as barbed staves or hammers. They were very agile, which was expected, since Professor Dai had drilled the fact into their minds, but they were not particularly strong.

Xiao Lin was at the helm of the charge, and finally encountered his first opponent. It was a merfolk that was only half as tall as he was. The merfolk was speaking in a language he did not understand, but was still incredibly annoying to listen to. Xiao Lin did not want to get careless, so he immediately used the full extent of his Phantom Steps, using his complicated footwork to completely evade the merfolk's attack.

The merfolk was immediately forced off balance, almost falling down as Xiao Lin stabbed his Holy Soul Sword right down its back. Xiao Lin was worried about the defensive properties of the merfolk's scales, but his blade was a lot sharper than he had thought, and he pierced through the merfolk like butter.

The merfolk was not stupid, and managed try and avoid his strike, so the blade did not pierce its heart, missing just by a little as red and greenish fluids started to gush out of its body.

However, the merfolk did not lose all its strength as it suddenly latched its claws tightly onto Xiao Lin's blade. It suddenly lunged backward toward Xiao Lin, aiming its spiky scales at him.

Merfolks were not intelligent, but it did not mean they possessed no intelligence at all. It was obvious his opponent knew how to utilize its body in a fight.

Xiao Lin did indeed get hit, but his Warbear Leather Armor definitely deserved its Bronze-rank as all Xiao Lin felt was a prickling sensation. However, he was agitated and angry, so he gripped the hilt of his sword tightly as he converted all his other attributes into strength, raising his foot and sending the merfolk flying with a kick. The creature shot through the air like a bullet, flying for a few dozen meters before forming a crater in the sand.

Despite the intensity of the battle, everyone else suddenly looked toward Xiao Lin in shock.

Chapter 219 - Landfall (3)

Chapter 219: Landfall (3)

Xiao Lin's current attribute scores amounted to more than 50. With Miracle converting half of his other attributes into Strength, his sudden burst of power was around 30 points in Strength.

Xiao Lin let out a breath, redistributing his attributes before walking toward the corpse of that merfolk since his sword was still stuck to its body. On the way, four merfolk tried to attack Xiao Lin, but Xiao Lin did not even give them a chance.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Xiao Lin unsheathed his Peakfire Staff from his waist, sending a few Flame Bullets at them. Flame Bullets did not need to charge for long, and had the lowest requirements in terms of gathering the elements. Within such a close distance, on top of Xiao Lin diverting his attributes toward his intelligence, he could hit the merfolk even if he shut his eyes.

All six of the Flame Bullets hit their targets, and the defensive capabilities of their scales came into play. The Flame Bullets were not too powerful, and even two bullets hitting the same target would not be able to kill them, but they did not continue pursuing Xiao Lin, as they were too busy trying to keep themselves from burning.

The Peakfire Staff's passive burning ability suddenly activated, causing the Flame Bullets to continuously burn at the merfolk.

The merfolk felt pain, just like any human from Earth, and thanks to their amphibious nature, they hated fire to an extreme degree. He pulled out his Holy Soul Sword and began slashing at them. Thanks to the sword, his Basic Swordsmanship managed to reach LV9, which was the maximum.

The feeling was extremely strange. As he attacked with his sword, he seemed to feel like something possessed his body. His consciousness was still obviously his own, but that strange feeling caused all his strikes to be ever more skillful, and even the power behind his strikes increased.

Xiao Lin was actually curious where his skills stood at that moment. Even though he had defeated Cheng Ming in the simulated battle, he still had his suspicions, not sure if he could really handle an actual war.

That was why he held nothing back the moment the assault began, using every single skill and technique he had learned in his three months at the academy.

The end result was the admiration of everyone around him. Xiao Lin's blade seemed to slice through merfolk like the grim reaper, claiming countless lives as their scales could absolutely not stand up to Xiao Lin's strength. When Basic Swordsmanship reached the maximum level, the wielder could start learning how to attack a target's weak points.

Even if he met any foes who were more skilled, Xiao Lin would just start using his Slashing skill. The merfolk were not intelligent, so they never thought to hide away or stop the skill from charging. They instead continued charging wildly, and when Xiao Lin's blade fell, he would convert his attributes into Strength, cleaving the merfolk in half.

Phantom Steps was also used to great effect by Xiao Lin. Fully utilized, Phantom Steps would create afterimages, and these afterimages were different from those produced by magic. The images did not hold any offensive abilities, and could only be used to trick opponents, but that was more than enough to deal with the stupid merfolk.

The merfolk were actually quite agile; if it was not for his Phantom Steps, Xiao Lin could have had some difficulty avoiding their attacks, especially from their barbed staves. Just a glancing hit was enough to flay flesh.

Phantom Steps allowed Xiao Lin to avoid being hit for the entire battle, outside of the first hit when the merfolk lunged at him.

Xiao Lin actually did not need to use his Flame Bullets at all, but he still occasionally took out his Peakfire Staff and shot out a few at the merfolks that other people were fighting when he was not occupied. The effects were quite good, with the burning effect kicking in quite often, allowing the others to seize the initiative.

They did not say anything during the battle, but he gained a few appreciative looks from his actions. After a while, Xiao Lin decided to just hold his staff in his left hand and his sword in his right. His armor had already been dyed in red and green from the merfolk, and he looked like a death god, slaughtering all the merfolk in sight.

Xiao Lin had deliberately made sure that all his weapons were single-handed weapons in preparation of dual-wielding. In truth, most swordsmen opted for large or heavy swords, but one-handed swords tended to be lighter and unable to deal as much damage.

With his help, Class Seven started to have an easier time fighting. The merfolk were still sentient beings in the end, and all sentient beings knew fear.

They had started to fear Xiao Lin, so a lot of the merfolk started to turn their attention to the other classes. Once everyone the other members of Class Seven reached the shore, Xiao Lin started to take it easy.

The Miracle skill had ended, and thanks to repeated usage, Xiao Lin started to feel dizzy. After the short but intense battle, the sky had already started to brighten. Even without the effects of the scroll, Xiao Lin could clearly see the situation on the shore.

The merfolk numbered much more than what the reports indicated. By Xiao Lin's rough estimate, there were several thousands of them. It looked like an endless sea of merfolk, which was quite terrifying, but in truth they had been separated into several waves. Thanks to each class reaching land at a different location, they managed to stagger the merfolk, leading to them not having to deal with as many enemies.

Xiao Lin's abilities had allowed Class Seven's battle to end quickly. The remaining merfolk on their side had already begun to retreat, and under the gazes of admiration from his classmates, Xiao Lin started to divert his attention to the other classes.

A few other classes had also finished off the merfolk attacking them. The merfolks' combat abilities were actually much lower than what they had anticipated, and the rest of the classes were not weak either, so they did not lag too far behind. Those fish-people were quite weak in resolve as well; the moment the first wave of attacks failed, the merfolk behind them started to retreat.

However, Xiao Lin quickly furrowed his eyebrows when he noticed a few classes had already started to charge toward the hills, even though the merfolk on the beach had not been completely

eliminated yet. Each class did differ in ability, and the class monitors alone were not to make up for every possible flaw. A few classes even looked like they were struggling.

“Those idiots are way too impatient! There’s no special reward for the first class that takes over the supply depot!” Xiao Lin muttered to himself unhappily. He had actually planned on helping the other classes completely eliminate their enemies on the beach before preparing to attack the hill. After all, the enemies on the hill had already been thoroughly suppressed by their warships.

Chapter 220 - Attacking The Hill

Chapter 220: Attacking The Hill

Xiao Lin had actually been quite worried something like that would happen, but he did not expect that the problems would pop up before they even beat their foes on the beach.

This examination involved all twelve classes, which would obviously create a lot of problems. It would be hard to get all the classes to work together, since everyone was just an acting class monitor. Without a clear hierarchy, no one wanted to be commanded by another.

He was not the only one with those thoughts, as he quickly saw Cheng Ming rushing toward those at the helm. The two sides seemed to be engaged in discussions, and it was clear that Cheng Ming saw how problematic the situation was.

Cheng Ming was quite suited to handle any negotiation, since he was quite popular among the first years. Xiao Lin decided to ignore what was happening in front, turning around and saying, “Gu Xiaoyue, Zhou Feng, go check out the status of your groups.”

Xiao Lin and Qin Chuan were on the lookout just in case any merfolk decided to rush at them. He gave the instructor a good look, and noticed Qin Chuan’s armor was just as bloodstained as his, but not from Qin Chuan’s own blood. It was obvious he was not injured from the earlier battle, and looked to be quite relaxed. Xiao Lin’s expectations of the older student were spot on; his battle capabilities were definitely a few notches higher than most of them.

Xiao Lin quickly received his reports, which caused him to scowl. Only four of them had died, but there were 28 injured, which was practically half of them. Of those 28, around seven or eight of them were heavily injured. Two of them even had their legs turned into mush, which was quite a cruel sight to see.

That was only from fighting the merfolk. If they were to face the stronger orcs, their casualties might be much higher. Even though they were no strangers to battle, it was still the first time any of them had a proper taste of war.

“Did you all get some potions with your redemption points?” Qin Chuan asked.

A few of them with lighter injuries just had some flesh wounds, so their problems were not too bad. Some of them shook their heads while the others nodded; they either did not use their points to buy any potions or were not willing to use them just yet.

Xiao Lin was quite frustrated, as recovery potions were not that expensive. Qin Chuan or himself could afford a lot of them, but the rest of them were different. However, there was no way he would allow the uninjured to offer up their own potions, so he could only sigh and say, “Bandage your injuries first. Hopefully, there will be some recovery potions at the supply depot.”

The bandaging was left to Qin Chuan, as the rest of them were not too experienced with it. He then left Zhou Feng to keep watch while he brought Gu Xiaoyue and a few other capable students to help with the other classes.

“Gu Xiaoyue, I recall you have Elementary Speed Boost and Elementary Protection among your support magics?” Xiao Lin asked as they walked.

“I have Elementary Projectile Shield as well,” Gu Xiaoyue said, her tone cold as usual.

Xiao Lin paused, asking curiously, “I definitely did not see that under your information the last time I checked.”

Gu Xiaoyue shot him a look, probably unhappy that he was looking at her information. “I learnt it one day before the examination.”

Xiao Lin’s lips twitched. It was quite a blow to his ego talking to a magical genius.

“How much can your Elementary Speed Boost increase my speed by?”

“With my current mastery, at most 20%.” Gu Xiaoyue calmly gave the numbers. Xiao Lin did not doubt her at all, but he could not resist cursing her talent. He knew Elementary Speed Boost as well, but the skill only increased speed by 10%. Achieving 20% required completely mastering the spell.

“Increase my speed and use Ice Bullets to slow down the enemies. Everyone else, follow me!” Xiao Lin gave out a few simple commands. Everyone who came, aside from Gu Xiaoyue, was a melee specialist. That was because Xiao Lin felt that bows were ill-suited for the chaos of this particular battle, but the main reason was actually because he lacked faith in the accuracy of the archers in their class.

Gu Xiaoyue did not waste time speaking as well. She waved her wand as a faint green light fell on his body alongside a dark yellow one, which was indicative of the Elementary Protection spell. It could reduce the impact of physical damage that did not have the piercing trait, equal to half a grade of defense.

The merfolk all used blunt objects as their weapons, so the Protection spell was especially effective, reducing the damage from those weapons greatly. With Gu Xiaoyue’s intelligence, she had more than enough to cast a dozen Elementary Protection spells.

She cast that spell on everyone with great precision and speed. By the time they reached the merfolk, everyone had a layer of protection on them.

Even though Xiao Lin’s Miracle was already on cooldown, this damage output did not decrease. Holy Soul Sword’s swordsmanship enhancing ability was way too useful. He was able to clearly feel

the benefits of having Basic Swordsmanship as he sliced through the weak points in the merfolks' armor like butter.

As far as defense went, the speed boost greatly covered for the fact that Xiao Lin could not move his attributes around. With the 20% increase in speed, Xiao Lin's actions felt like the wind, and Phantom Steps were not limited to just defense. As he attacked, he was able to maintain his dazzling speed, essentially toying with the merfolk.

Gradually, more and more areas were cleaned up and the beach started to become quiet.

The sun had already risen high in the sky, and the vibrant sunlight shone on the beach full of merfolk carcasses. The smell of blood filled the air.

Cheng Ming's negotiations finally bore fruit, his popularity proving useful. Under his advice, the other class monitors decided to temporarily gather at the foot of the hill to conduct a short meeting. The instructors accompanied them as well. No matter what their feelings were toward the instructors, the battle at the beach served as an eye-opener to how useful their combat abilities would be in this examination.

As for everyone else, they were all resting and preparing nearby. What allowed them to relax for a bit was the destroyed archer towers littered on the hill thanks to the support fire from the warships. It seemed like there were no magic-users atop the hill either, so they managed to earn themselves a period of respite.

There were actually still people landing on the beach. Other than the twelve classes, there were four other warships with the fleet. It was only then that Xiao Lin and the others found out the other ships had carried engineers and potion masters. They were all the NPCs for that particular examination.

Chapter 221 - Discussing the Hill Attack

Chapter 221: Discussing the Hill Attack

Based on actual history, those people also came along with them during the landfall. However, the most pressing issue right then was discussing how to attack the hill.

More than 20 men and women were present on the beach not far away. They were either sitting or standing, and some had worried faces while others had a look of excitement. They were the instructors and acting monitors of all twelve freshmen classes.

Cheng Ming was the last to arrive. He apologized repeatedly and explained that he was late because he had to deal with class affairs. In response, Xiao Lin could not resist saying, "You could've actually appointed an interim group leader and have them handle the minor stuff. Our combat strength is relatively high right now, so we should spend more time on fighting instead of being dragged down by other stuff."

The several monitors who heard Xiao Lin's say 'we' immediately had the urge to complain. Though it was a fact that all of them were talented individuals with stellar combat strength, they were peeved that Xiao Lin would include himself with the likes of them.

Not everyone noticed the situation on Xiao Lin's side during the earlier battle. After all, the landing point some distance away was about halfway around the beach. Nevertheless, the monitors whom Xiao Lin had lent support earlier gave him a grateful glance.

"Interim group leader?" Cheng Ming was momentarily stunned.

Xiao Lin smiled bitterly and roughly explained that they had the authority to make such an appointment because they were the commanding officers of that operation.

He was clearly not the only person who thought of that. At least half the classes had already appointed a group leader to help coordinate management, while the remaining few had a look of realization on their faces.

The next step was to discuss the attack on the hill. Xiao Lin observed the terrain before arriving. The hill was not that high and the slope was very gentle, while the distance closer to the beach was basically an open area without any vegetation.

The terrain was rather simple, so even inexperienced rookie commanding officers like them knew that there were no tactics to be mentioned there. On the premise that their ultimate goal was seizing the supply depot on the hill, they could only think of one way to accomplish it, and that was by storming it.

"Based on the information, the defensive facilities on the hill are very simple. Even if there are a few archer towers, they were all completely flattened by our warship earlier."

"I looked at it from a distance just now. I chose archery as my elective and my Eagle Eye skill is quite effective too. There's a fortress around the supply depot on the hill, but it's only about ten meters high."

"Ten meters! That's at least the height of a three-story building!"

"It's actually very low. Our ancient city walls are higher than this."

"Okay, okay, don't go off topic. Let's discuss how to attack the hill. Since there's a fortress, do we have equipment for the siege?"

"Didn't an architect come with us? They must have the necessary military supplies. That's the reason they came, right?"

Everyone chimed in with their views, while Xiao Lin remained as low-key as ever and did not take the initiative to speak. Everyone had the same information anyway. When he heard that however, he could not help but add, "Military supplies? No, no, I don't think the architects came with us for that."

"Then why, pray tell, did they come along?" The monitor who had been refuted was obviously very upset with Xiao Lin.

“The resurrection tower! Lest we forget, what’s the most important thing if we capture this place? The resurrection tower, of course. That’s the key to guaranteeing survival,” Xiao Lin said calmly.

Other people were shocked not because they did not know what a resurrection tower was. In fact, they had known about it since their first history lesson. Instead, it was because their impression of the resurrection tower was limited to books only, and the only person who had actually seen it up close was Xiao Lin.

“Even if it is because of the resurrection tower, that’s something to think about for later. First things first, let’s discuss how to attack the hill,” an instructor said helplessly.

This problem with discussing something in a large group was that the discussion could easily be led astray. They still had no inkling of what the defensive force on the hill was, whether it was only the weak merfolk or whether the orcs were present too.

The only certainty was the absence of the previously anticipated appearance of those wolf cavalry units, otherwise they would have attacked immediately after they reached the shore. Such cavalry units were worthless in a fortress.

“If we storm in, I have only one question. Who should do it?” Xiao Lin spoke little, but his sentences left everyone speechless whenever he spoke up.

This question sent everyone into another round of silence. The vanguard had to test the enemy’s strength, which naturally meant that they would suffer more casualties. Who would want their own class to die in vain? What if the monitors’ assessment also included the survival rate of their classmates?

“I’ll go!” Cheng Ming volunteered first.

Everyone breathed a sigh of relief. The result was just as they expected, but although they were delighted, they could not help but shoot each other contemptuous glances, probably to mock each other for being too timid.

Xiao Lin sighed too. He was thinking about the question earlier, but his considerations were not about who rushed in first. Seeing as Cheng Ming had taken the initiative to take on that thankless task, Xiao Lin also said, “In that case, I’ll go with Cheng Ming.”

Qin Chuan, who has not said a single word yet, looked at Xiao Lin in a strange and somewhat dissatisfied manner. He was just about to open his mouth when Xiao Lin continued, “I’m actually confused. Don’t you think the landfall battle is a bit too easy?”

“Easy? Two-thirds of our class were injured!”

“My point exactly. The death rate is relatively low compared to the injuries. The merfolk’s attacks are really weak and they don’t seem like a regular army either. All they did was swarm us and disperse after we struck back.”

“You mean to say that the landfall battle is too easy and that the next tasks will be much harder?”

Xiao Lin smiled bitterly, “More or less, yes. I was thinking about this question when I saw the architects earlier. Our warship is actually quite powerful for long-range suppression, but if we capture the supply depot, how much preparation time will we have to rearrange our defense?”

Cheng Ming frowned and continued along Xiao Lin’s line of thought. He suddenly said, “You’re saying that the orc’s reinforcements will come very quickly so we must capture the supply depot as soon as possible!”

“Correct. Guys, I’m afraid we don’t have a lot of time. The difficulty of this task will not possibly be limited to just that. If the architects are really allowed to erect the resurrection tower here, the next defensive battle won’t be too easy!”

After a short pause, Xiao Lin came to the final conclusion. “For one class alone to be the vanguard is too small a number. In addition to increasing the casualty rate, it will only be a meaningless waste of time! In light of that, I’ll take on the main task of attacking the hill with Cheng Ming. Now’s not the time to be concerned about a loss. If we can’t capture the supply depot as soon as possible and re-build our defense, we stand to lose everything!”

Chapter 222 - Agility Scroll

Chapter 222: Agility Scroll

Xiao Lin’s words prompted everyone to exchange glances. Several monitors hesitated before raising their hands and saying, “In that case, I’ll join! Let’s seize the supply depot at first charge!”

None of them were idiots and it all boiled down to their unfamiliarity with the resurrection tower. The graveness of the situation struck them after Xiao Lin’s reminder. The last thing they wanted was for members of their own class to suffer excessive casualties, but all that hinged on the successful completion of their task.

Seeing that everyone’s enthusiasm for discussion was aroused again, Xiao Lin said at the opportune moment, “If possible, I’m actually hoping that everyone can cooperate together, at least for now. After all, this is a task we all have in common, and everyone will be rewarded for completing it.”

Chen Dao, the monitor of Class Twelve, was puzzled. He asked, “Aren’t we cooperating now?”

“What I mean is, for example, the long-range attack troops will gather together to suppress their firepower,” Xiao Lin explained his purpose. In truth, that was his intention for that meeting. When he saw the frowns on some of the class monitors, he immediately added, “Our skill levels are still very low right now. We lack mass destruction spells. In order to avoid accidental injuries when attacking the hill, it’s impossible to let our ships continue suppressing them during our attack if we want to avert any accidental injury. In such a situation, we have to rely on ourselves to prevent casualties, the remote attacks of a single class are far from enough!”

“Who will command this operation?” Several class monitors stared warily at Xiao Lin.

“Chen Dao.” Xiao Lin pointed at the young boy nearby. His action stunned everyone again, as they had all thought that Xiao Lin wanted to take the opportunity to consolidate power for himself.

Chen Dao had the most outstanding magical ability among all those people. Of course, there was also Gu Xiaoyue, but Xiao Lin was aware that she was not suitable for the job. In fact, he was also a bit reluctant to appoint Gu Xiaoyue as group leader previously.

Although Chen Dao was only 18 years-old, he did not have the slightest bit of stage fright when faced with the crowd's suspicious and weird looks. He patted his chest and made a vow, "Don't worry, leave the minor stuff to me. I still remember how I led troops in a game..."

Xiao Lin immediately ignored the latter half of that guy's sentence. "Okay, let's move on to the next topic. I need to know the detailed number of people from each class who chose support spell courses, as well as the types of spells. Come on, there's no need to keep this kind of thing a secret. I'll start with announcing Class Seven's."

Following Xiao Lin's active conversation, the emergency meeting at the foot of the hill finally took shape. In fact, the entire operation did not require strong abilities. For it to be united and cooperative, it was necessary for individuals to make a general outline of the plan and Xiao Lin just happened to take the initiative to do so.

At a moment when time was of the essence, the others also acquiesced to Xiao Lin's suggestion. Inevitably however, they repeatedly emphasized that the united and cooperative effort was only limited to the attack on the hill. After the supply depot was seized, the original management system of each class had to be restored. Clearly, they were still worried about being usurped by Xiao Lin.

Although they were very confident that they would be retained as the monitor, the student union had not announced the selection method of year leader yet. What if it was based on the comprehensive evaluation of that exam? They did not want to give Xiao Lin such a clear chance to show his leadership.

The instructors collectively held their silence. Except for the occasional comment, they were mostly quiet, since they knew very well that the 12 people in front of them would be full-fledged monitors after the monthly exam, unless something untoward happened. On the other hand, the instructors would no longer be instructors, which meant that they are one level lower than the monitors in terms of position. Thus, it was only natural that they would not refute the future monitors at that juncture.

In any case, Xiao Lin continued to chair the meeting until some time later. After 20 minutes, everyone went back to their respective classes and continued the preparations. Qin Chuan expressed a certain appreciation for Xiao Lin and chatted with him about the year leader.

Prior to that, Xiao Lin—who had yet to be formally appointed as class monitor—had not considered the issue of year leader at all. However, all positions in the academy would affect his future status in the New World, so he did not hide his views on his interest in that position.

As a freshman of the year prior, Qin Chuan was naturally aware of the selection process of the grade leader. In his freshman year, the selection of the grade leader was decided after the sixth monthly exam, which was also halfway through the semester, and then Qin Chuan again He lowered his voice and revealed a little inside story to Xiao Lin.

He claimed that he had a good relationship with the previous year leader and heard some news as a result. In the third monthly exam, which is the exam for determining the position of the class leader, the academy would first determine the candidates for the year leader. If their exam performance was very poor, they would be eliminated from the list of candidates even if they served as class monitor.

In the subsequent monthly exams after that, other candidates would then be eliminated based on the comprehensive evaluation. When there was only one candidate left, that person would then become the year leader.

To put it simply, it was a filtering selection. The academy attached great importance to the selection of year leaders and the selection model was pretty fair too. It was the first time that Xiao Lin learned about that, and naturally appreciated Qin Chuan's goodwill.

Xiao Lin had also guessed that Qin Chuan displayed kindness so willingly because he saw the former's performance in the battle earlier. Based on Qin Chuan's experience, it was probably easy for him to tell that Xiao Lin would have no problem becoming the year leader.

Later, Xiao Lin and Cheng Ming went to consult the architect who came with the warship and received a disappointing answer. They did not carry any siege equipment and even expressed surprise at Xiao Lin's inquiry, since the orcs' construction skills were very bad and the fortress was of poor quality. After that, the architects also contributed a batch of elementary agility special magic scrolls to them, since they could not help in other aspects even if they wanted to.

"Agility scroll? We're going to attack the hill. What's the use of this thing? Why don't they give us any fireball scrolls!" Cheng Ming complained about it on the way back, but the people were nothing more than NPCs. In other words, they were merely complementing the simulated environment that had been set before.

Xiaolin carried a big bag of scrolls and pondered before suddenly breaking out in a smile. He said, "We've been going about this the wrong way. We have to break out from our earthly mindset. We don't have any siege ladders here. The fortress earlier wasn't actually that high, right?"

Cheng Ming nodded.

"Don't forget what the Agility attribute gives us. Our attributes aren't limited to just one effect. In addition to movement speed and attack speed, agility can also affect flexibility, balance, and so on. Anything ring a bell to you?"

Cheng Ming was stunned. "Do you want us to just scale it? The fortress is nearly ten meters high! "

"That's exactly my plan. I've just counted these scrolls and there aren't a lot of them. The total is only over a hundred points. The effects are to increase agility by five XP. Go back and try to find someone with a higher agility."

Chapter 223 - The Hill Attack Begins

Chapter 223: The Hill Attack Begins

Preparatory work took almost an hour. During that period, Xiao Lin did not forget to instruct each class to send some people to guard the main roads down the hill. It was to ensure that the enemy in the fortress would not be allowed to slip away that easily.

He was still worried in spite of that and coordinated once more with the various class monitors to gather students with relatively high Basic Archery skills. The task for them was very arduous—they were responsible for ensuring that no flying beast left the sky above the hill.

There were a few people who voiced out on how Xiao Lin seemed to be preparing for a huge war, but Xiao Lin merely replied, “Aren’t you puzzled? All signs indicate that the orc army is coming, but the landfall itself was a sudden attack. How could the orc army know and respond so quickly when we were surrounded by water?”

“We didn’t manage to kill all the fleeing merfolk. They must have informed the orcs.”

“That doesn’t make sense. Haven’t you asked the captain of your respective warship before this? This supply depot is three days away from the nearest orc barracks. This estimate applies if the cavalry is moving at full speed. It would take much longer if they’re journeying on foot. The merfolk are an amphibious race too and they can’t stay on land for too long. The most they can stand is one or two days, after which they’d have to head back to the water.”

It was not that Xiao Lin had more information, but in fact, it was because of the sudden change in topic by all their course’s tutors and lecturers before the monthly exam. Xiao Lin found it a little strange at that point and made a point to remember it. For example, knowledge on merfolk was specifically mentioned in Professor Dai’s history class.

In order to prevent everything from dragging along further, Xiao Lin conducted a simple discussion with the other monitors and instructors after Cheng Ming gathered a sufficient number of people. The decision was to launch an immediate attack.

There was a total of more than a hundred people in the vanguard, including six acting monitors and nine instructors. According to Xiao Lin’s vision, that team was the elite and avoided unnecessary casualties. They quickly went to the fortress and opened the gate, allowing a steady stream of people to invade.

Chen Dao was responsible for organizing remote fire suppression using spells and archery from the foot of the hill. Of course, he remembered Xiao Lin’s order not to let anyone with Basic Archery below LV4 or Basic Perception below LV3 to get involved. There was no guarantee that those below that level could aim their spells or arrows at the enemy instead of their own people who were engaged in a melee.

Gu Xiaoyue’s mission was simple but very important. She had to apply Elementary Speed Boost spells to everyone in the first wave of the charge. There were more than 100 people in total, which equated to more than 100 people she had to cast on.

Even though it was only a low-level spell, the consumption of mental power was surely astonishing. Although there were several other people who knew how to cast that spell, their skill levels were too low and the acceleration effect was only 10%.

A 10% difference was still very obvious, and while Xiao Lin was still hesitating, Gu Xiaoyue made light of it and said, “Don’t worry. I’ll handle it.”

She immediately ignored Xiao Lin and waved her wand, applying the spell to everyone who was about to attack the hill. With her standard, the Elementary Speed Boost could be completed in almost half a second without needing breaks or rests in between. The light green halo immediately shrouded the crowd, attracting the attention of many.

Xiao Lin stared blankly, with three minutes already passed when he snapped back to his senses. Gu Xiaoyue had already returned by then, and she adjusted her spectacle frame before saying in her usual calm tone, “It’s done.”

The corners of Xiao Lin’s mouth twitched a couple of times and he finally sighed, “Alright then. You won’t be participating in the long-range fire suppression during the hill attack later, so have a good rest for the time being.”

“Mind your own business!” Gu Xiaoyue was not used to Xiao Lin’s demeanor.

Xiao Lin said unhappily, “Look at yourself in the mirror. It’s as white as a piece of paper! Don’t try to act tough. A hundred Elementary Speed Boost spells is hard to manage, even for you.”

Xiao Lin forced the arrangements on his own initiative and also reasoned that he was the commanding officer, and Gu Xiaolin was the group leader appointed by him. He was still uneasy when he left, so he shouted in Chen Dao’s direction, “Chen Dao! I won’t spare you if I come back and see Gu Xiaoyue in your team!”

After speaking, Xiao Lin picked up the Holy Soul Sword in his right hand, and held the Peakfire Staff in his left. He rushed towards the hill in large strides. The rest followed closely and the other monitors had a quick pace too. After three months of studying, their confidence was at an all-time high, especially after such a heated battle on the beach with the merfolk. Most of them felt really good about themselves

Chen Dao was left with an inexplicable expression on his face and he muttered to the person next to him, “Why the hell is that guy so pissed?”

Regardless of what Gu Xiaoyue thought, she had indeed won the envy and admiration of countless people earlier. Despite having been named the strongest mage in freshman year by everyone since her enrollment in the academy, seeing her in action was a true sight to behold. There were always people who remained skeptical and others who felt that they were better than her.

Under normal circumstances, it was impossible to compete with each other in the academy. The previous two monthly exams were also conducted in separate classes. On that occasion however, Gu Xiaoyue casted more than 100 Elementary Speed Boost spells in one breath, which came as a shock to everyone. If that woman’s mental strength could be likened to the sea, the mental strength of could be likened to streams at best.

The charging team who enjoyed the acceleration effect was also very grateful to Gu Xiaoyue, especially when they tore open the Elementary Agility special effect scroll. They discovered that the 20% acceleration effect actually had an effect on the additional five agility points from the scroll.

Xiao Lin was the one who enjoyed it most. He felt as light as a swallow if without activating the Miracle skill. The distance from the foot of the hill to the fortress was short, and things became tense when they entered within 50 meters. Sharp weapons were thrown like rain, including throwing axes, javelins, or spears, and occasionally some arrows.

In fact, the power of ordinary bows and arrows was not as powerful as these directly-thrown weapons. The throwers seemed to have considerate strength, as the weapons made a harsh screeching sound against the air. Before anyone could react, someone had screamed and fell. The person, despite wearing chain armor that had significant defensive ability, was pierced through the heart with a spear.

One-hit kill!

The charge's footwork halted slightly and everyone felt a chill come up their backs. Xiao Lin's roar then came, "Do you want to be a live target by standing there like idiots? We can't retreat now! Charge! We can only rush forward and hope to survive!"

Chen Dao had been keeping close attention to the developments on the hill and did not hesitate to shoot a flaming fireball. He majored in flame spells and used a flame ball to start the prelude to the attack.

Chapter 224 - During the Hill Attack

Chapter 224: During the Hill Attack

Strictly speaking, people like them could not be considered an army. Even after an initial three months of studying, all they learnt was how to master the fighting methods in Planet Norma. In fact, they were still far from being a real army.

Strict discipline and close cooperation were two aspects that eluded them, but they completely suppressed the guarding forces on the hill in terms of momentum at least.

Chen Dao showed ample zeal for command work, but when the real battle started, he focused more on his spellcasting. Gu Xiaoyue, for all her complaining, still rested obediently next to him. Without that woman robbing him of his limelight, the subsequent events could be regarded as Chen Dao's personal performance.

After all, he was a spellcaster possessing abilities second only to Gu Xiaoyue. He had been obsessed with online games since he was a child, so he chose the same aggressive fire spells. Compared to his flame balls, everyone else's were not even on the same level.

Chen Dao had mastered the Flame Ball to its fullest. The burning ball of fire was dark red, had a higher temperature, and had a more accurate flight trajectory. The violent explosion was much more intense when it struck the fortress, and objects vaguely resembling limbs were seen shooting into the sky.

The others followed close behind and a couple of sparse spells followed one after another. The types of spells that a freshman would have mastered were very limited. Attack spells were also

limited to Energy Bombs, Wind Blades, Flame Balls, and the like. Fortunately, their opponent seemed to lack the necessary spell and were quickly suppressed after being crushed by those spells.

Xiao Lin and the others took the opportunity to speed up the charge after some pressure was relieved off them. In fact, the thrown spears and axe threatened him very little. Although the thrower was strong, the trajectory of the throws was very simple. Those who died under the initial wave of attacks were really unlucky, but after some tricks, it was much more difficult to strike Xiao Lin again.

At most, Xiao Lin had only previously led teams during online games and it was impossible for him to have the experience of leading a troop in real-life, but a person who has no knowledge must have some common sense. If Xiao Lin was certain he would not be hit by the long-range weapons, then other monitors or instructors would basically have the same ability to ensure that they could reach the bottom of the fortress without any injury.

Other people did not have such confidence though. Many people might not generally pay much attention to talented students, and it was only then that they had a realization of how big the gap actually was.

Even though they managed to save a small amount of redemption points in the first two monthly exams, buying life potions alone was already a pinch, let alone Black Iron-rank or even Bronze-rank armor. Without the support of basic skills as well as defensive armor, they would either die or be maimed even with a mere scrape by a flying axe. In fact, dying like that was not so bad after all. Those who had half their arms sliced off could only writhe in pain on the floor. Screams could be heard even from the foot of the hill, sending everyone's emotions into a downward spiral.

Those who were still charging had their own classmates or friends, and deserting them at such a point in time was certainly out of the question. Even if Chen Dao had suppressed the attack with those magic spells, their mental strength was limited after all. If the enemy seized the advantage to launch another wave of attacks, the wounded who fell on the hillside would certainly die.

Those people therefore began slowing down. They carried up the injured individuals and took them back to the safety zone at the foot of the hill. Though there was nothing wrong with their actions, they forgot that they were already halfway to the top of the hill. Their mission was to take control of the fortress within the shortest time possible so as to allow subsequent people to enter continuously, otherwise it would only end in greater casualties.

Although Xiao Lin was at the forefront, he constantly paid attention to the situation behind him. The scene prompted him to lament to himself. After all, none of them were soldiers and their drawbacks were finally revealed.

Upon seeing that there was some chaos in the crowd and the speed of the charge was greatly slowed down, Cheng Ming and the other squad leaders were getting anxious. Regardless of how loudly they discouraged the others or how sternly they reprimanded them, the outcome was not as they expected.

It was futile to continue like that, and something had to be done.

Xiao Lin stopped for a while and raised his head to glance at the towering fortress. The distance was getting very close. He took a deep breath and made the decision to activate his Miracle skill. It

was less than an hour since he first activated it and there would be immense pressure on his body. However, it is not the time to be considering all that.

On that occasion, he converted all his attributes to agility, and along with the bonus effect of the Elementary Agility scroll, reached a total of 40 points. Most importantly, that attribute was also affected by the Elementary Speed Boost.

If calculated as a whole, Xiao Lin's speed had reached a terrifying level. He no longer cared about anyone else behind him and rushed to the front at once. Cheng Ming could only feel the wind blowing in front of him and stared blankly at the Xiao Lin's rushing figure in front of him.

Xiao Lin was silently calculating the distance as well, and when he was less than 20 meters away from the fortress, he raised the Peakfire Staff in his left hand and sent flame bullets shooting out constantly. He did not change his attributes into intelligence, and the flame bullets he shot out became slightly lower as a result. However, the burning bonus of the Peakfire Staff meant that the burn effect was quite amazing.

Being burned was not a pleasant experience. If the enemy did not have enough fire resistance or a spell defense armor of the same level, the continuous burning sensation was much more uncomfortable than death.

In fact, Xiao Lin was rather average in his casting speed since he did not transform his attributes to intelligence. Fortunately for him, the rapid casting of the Flame Bullet made up for it a little, but even so, it was difficult to form a real and effective threat to the enemies of the entire fortress.

In any case, a real war was not dependent only on pure calculation. The enemies that Chen Dao's flame ball burnt to pieces had nowhere to avenge their grievances, but Xiao Lin was unlucky because the enemies he burnt would grit their teeth with the desire to vent their anger and tear him into pieces.

To put it in layman's terms, Xiao Lin's lone army has successfully incited the enemy's animosity. Nearby targets were always easier to hit than distant targets, thereby leading to a very odd incident.

Enraged by Xiao Lin's contemptuous attitude, a dense wave of throwing axes and spears flew over the fortress again. Even though Chen Dao's huge flame ball soon struck everything, the wave of attacks was almost entirely directed at Xiao Lin. Everyone looked over in shock and could not help but break into cold sweat for Xiao Lin.

Xiao Lin did not expect to draw everyone's attacks toward him that easily, though it was actually his plan all along to attract some attacks and create enough leeway for the rest.

The problem was that the wave of attacks came too quick and too fiercely, almost to a point where it was overwhelming.

Chapter 225 - Holy Soul Summoning

Chapter 225: Holy Soul Summoning

Xiao Lin felt that he might have underestimated the enemy's IQ. Did he have to be targeted in such a manner after only a slight provocation?

He had to execute the Phantom Step to the fullest, but it was also a very tiring endeavor because he needed to display dozens of footwork combinations in the shortest amount of time.

From the perspective of those bystanders, Xiao Lin was either creeping, advancing, retreating, or moving sideways, with each and every movement appearing as smooth as the flow of water. He did not pause at all because he would surely be struck if he stopped for even a brief second.

Even so, many attacks were still difficult to dodge. After all, the Phantom Step is only the most basic level of body techniques. The dozen or so footwork combinations still had blind spots when facing an attack of such magnitude.

Holy Soul Summoning!

Xiao Lin finally used another skill that was attached to the Holy Soul Sword. The long sword contained the soul of a swordsman, and as long as enough blood stained the weapon, the dead soul within the sword could be activated.

Xiao Lin had killed enough enemies during the earlier fierce battle on the beach. The blood on the blade had not dried up yet and it was the perfect time to activate the skill.

He felt the sword in his hand tremble violently. A low, soft whistle was let out, but was soon drowned in the sound of the howling air friction in the battlefield.

Then, Xiao Lin saw a gaseous mist emanating from the sword. It underwent a rapid change in the air and soon condensed into a completely human appearance. It was a fully armed swordsman, and the heavy armor on his body looked very old, though the épée in his hand glimmered with a cold light.

Xiao Lin tried to get a clear view of that guy's face through the helmet, but was disappointed to find only a dark, unknown gas inside with two twitchy light green flames. He was very familiar with that kind of flame, for the undead skeletons in The Final Land had the same flame too. After the ordeal, he asked Song Junlang and Lilith about the flame and found out that it was called the soulflame. It was just like Earth's will-o'-the-wisp and was a typical characteristic of the undead.

Xiao Lin could not help but purse his lips. Although it sounded holy because Lu Renjia named it the Holy Soul Sword, it was plainly obvious that the summoned being was a dead soul. Dead Soul Sword might be more apt a name although it bore little resemblance to an ordinary skeleton soldier.

Of course, he was only making a casual remark to himself. Although Planet Norma abhorred undead creatures, many colonial academies treated the undead as nothing more than a more unique branch of the magic arts.

Xiao Lin was originally worried about whether he could command that undead creature, since he had ample experience in The Final Land and knew quite a bit about the undead. The undead person's identity or profession became irrelevant after death, because all their consciousness and memory would not be retained once they became the undead.

However, Lu Renjia was a relatively reliable person and would certainly not give a dangerous sword to Xiao Lin. When Xiao Lin hesitated, the undead swordsman also stood in a daze. Spear and axes rained on his body like and yet he still remained motionless. His tattered armor seemed old, but his defensive ability was surprisingly high.

‘Help me defend against attacks.’

Xiao Lin tried giving out an instruction in his heart and soon saw the undead swordsman suddenly raising the heavy sword up high. Xiao Lin subconsciously stepped back a couple of steps to go into a defensive posture, but the next second, the swordsman’s épée had smashed down at the spear and axe in the sky.

Xiao Lin breathed a sigh of relief and finally figured out the method to control the undead swordsman. It seemed that there would be no need to worry as long as the Holy Soul Sword was in his hand.

The subsequent journey became easier with the undead swordsman’s presence. Although its movements seemed a bit clumsy and many attacks could not be blocked, the big undead man was like a human-shaped shield blocking Xiao Lin from the front.

The armor on the undead man’s body was considered to have a high defensive ability, with no gaps in each segment. However, there was no mask on his helmet. Xiao Lin’s worries soon manifested when he saw a spear being thrust right through the face of the undead swordsman some ten seconds later.

The swordsman simply took out the spear, threw it on the ground without making a sound, and continued forward seemingly unimpeded. That scene scared everyone a little, whether it was the monitors, instructors, other students, or enemies still on the fortress.

The natives of Planet Norma were not fearless. Even sturdy orcs with their aggressive nature had their own subjects of awe and fear. The undead was hated by the entire Planet Norma, including the orcs, because the Normans considered the undead to represent bad luck and disaster.

At that moment, Chen Dao’s also felt that the long-range attack by the fortress had been suppressed to its limit, so much so that there was even a relatively long period where they gave in. Xiao Lin was not going to let such an opportunity go of course, so he sprinted at full speed, and finally reached the base of the fortress wall.

This fortress looked rather strange, and as the architects who came with the ship mentioned earlier, the orcs’ craftsmanship level was quite low. Of course, the merfolk had no idea how to build basic buildings either, so those half-fish humanoid creatures usually live in the open air or in the water. Therefore, only the orcs could have built the fortress.

Orcs prefer not to have everything look exactly the same, and they were predisposed to some unique ideas even when building a fortress. However, such creativity would often be regarded as retarded back on Earth.

For example, many decorations such as animal teeth and bones were inserted into the wall of the fortress, perhaps to show the unique beauty and courage of the orcs. Professor Dai also said that

the warriors within the orcs' beastkin would display bones of their animal prey as a sign of their glory.

Xiao Lin finally understood why those architects suggested they just use the agility scroll to improve their climbing ability in order to scale the fortress. If they wanted to climb an ordinary wall using only their bare hands, it would be useless no matter how high their agility was, unless they had something like a floating spell. Sadly, such a spell was a high-level one that many were not yet able to master.

The fortress wall was not like a normal wall. Animal teeth and animal bones inlaid there could be used as support points to scale it.

Xiao Lin tried to grab the nearest tooth. It was about as thick as his thigh and seemed quite firm after he tried gripping it. Thus, he no longer hesitated to jump up after grabbing hold of the beast's tooth, after which he began climbing according to the arrangement. His sense of balance, jumping ability, and climbing skills had improved considerably thanks to the 40 agility points.

The undead swordsman had no such agility and was weighed down by a full body of armor. Xiao Lin was worried that the swordsman would unwittingly crush the animal teeth, so in the end he gave instructions to the swordsman to stay at the gate of the fortress and wait quietly.

Chapter 226 - Orc Commander

Chapter 226: Orc Commander

Everyone else did not stand idly while Xiao Lin succeeded in drawing all the enemy's attacks toward him. Cheng Ming was regarded as the temporary commanding officer of the assault team, and although he was an earnest person, he was far from a hesitant one. He immediately waved his hand and decisively ordered a dozen or so people to take care of the wounded individuals. The rest would then continue the charge with him.

Xiao Lin nimbly climbed up the wall using the teeth and bones embedded within the wall. As the distance was getting closer, he could vaguely see the face of the fortress's chief defenders. They had reddish-brown skin and hideous faces, and true to his expectations, the orcs were defending the fortress. The weak bodies of the merfolk made it impossible to throw weapons with that kind of power.

The fortress was only three stories high, and with Xiao Lin's agility, the orcs could not stop him even if they ignored Chen Dao's bombarding and attacked Xiao Lin with all their might. It took no time for Xiao Lin to easily climb to the top.

The orcs on the city wall were ready. Xiao Lin saw several red-brown orcs roaring over as soon as he showed up. Unlike the merfolk, those orcs had very strong bodies. Even if Xiao Lin was well prepared and transformed all his attributes into strength when scaling the wall, he felt like he had hit a dead end when he faced the oncoming charge from the orcs. He staggered for a brief moment and was almost driven out once more.

Xiao Lin did a backhand slash with his sword. The orc simultaneously raised the shield on its left arm to block the swing, but Xiao Lin simultaneously swung his staff and released several flame bombs, all of which struck the orc's leg and turned its brown skin into a crimson color. The redness were traces left behind by burns, and the orc roared even louder. Instead of retreating however, it strode forward and tried to drive Xiao Lin out of the fortress.

Xiao Lin gritted his teeth. The orcs were indeed braver and more ferocious than the merfolk. He glanced around slightly and saw that there were not a lot of orcs, only about a dozen in total that were all infantry. There were no traces of a wolf cavalry trace, but within the fortress was a large number of mermen as their main defense. Soon, more and more beasts began to swarm in his direction, which was not a good sign at all.

Xiao Lin was eager to extirpate himself from the situation. The Holy Soul Sword in his hand trembled slightly all of a sudden and he slashed it forward once more. The orc subconsciously raised a shield to defend against it, but the sword did not land on the shield. A wave of ripples appeared and the temperature of the air shot up instantaneously. It was already too late by the time the orc sensed that something was wrong. A spark exploded from the blade and finally forced the orc back.

It was flame sword aura, an external sword aura directly released through directly relaying with the fire element. It was the external sword aura that Xiao Lin had successfully mastered shortly before the monthly exam, and it was finally used for the first time.

The power of sword aura was exceptional and it was by no means comparable to ordinary swordsmanship. Even a rough-skinned orc with a simple leather armor on its body would be severely injured by the flame sword aura. Its fur had been burnt completely, and its reddish-brown skin turned black as it fell to the ground and convulsed in pain.

A noticeable frustration was also present in Xiao Lin's spirit. His flame sword aura was undoubtedly strong, but he was only at the beginner stage and the energy consumption was tremendous, especially when taking into account how external sword aura expended both physical and mental power.

However, Xiao Lin's predicament was not over just yet. The flame sword aura was able to cause substantial damage to the orcs, but the orcs' fear of death was lacking, which made them surge up quickly. At that point, Cheng Ming and the others were almost reaching the foot of the fortress and it would take some more time for them to climb up.

Xiao Lin had managed to buy some time, but it was not enough. He had to make sure that he survived. He took a deep breath and judged the situation within a very short time. He wanted to retreat from the city wall and go down because his own task was considered complete. Furthermore, it was difficult for him to deal with everything alone. The Phantom Steps still had their limits, and there were always going to be unavoidable attacks as well as blind spots.

As he turned around however, his eyes caught sight of a detail within the fortress. It was an open training ground, and a heavily-armed orc was roaring in Orcish. His voice was loud, like thunder, and Xiao Lin could hear it even from the top of the fortress.

That particular orc was unique compared to the other orcs. Its body was stronger, its hair was longer, and its head was bigger. More importantly, it had a long string of exquisite-looking animal bones dangling from its chest.

At that moment, Xiao Lin remembered Planet Norma's history by recalling Gu Xiaoyue's notes in class, so he knew that such an ornament was equivalent to honor, with the special animal bones on the string symbolizing just how much honor they had. In short, it was more or less a ranking system of the orcs. The higher their honor, the higher their status.

Unsurprisingly, that orc was probably the commanding officer of that fortress.

Xiao Lin's hesitation lasted for less than two seconds. He made a rough estimate of what little stamina he had. His heart skipped a beat and he immediately ditched his plan to retreat from the fortress. There was still another chance left and that was using his Warbear Leather Armor, of which the effect was a total increase in fighting spirit. The physical strength expended through continuous fighting could be supplemented through it, but its effects were very limited since it was only a Bronze-rank equipment. As an example, the physical strength that could be supplemented depended on the intensity and time of the battle, and there was no way to make use of it a second time.

Even so, such an effect could play an important role at critical junctures, making it quite worthy of its price of 2000 redemption points.

After the fighting spirit's effect was activated, bathing Xiao Lin's entire body in a luminous red light. He felt his exhaustion disappear in an instant, and even his spirit was in a state of extreme excitement. He somehow understood the reason why Lu Renjia made that piece and it actually seemed similar to stimulants seen on Earth. At the same time however, he also understood that his physical strength and mental energy would decline rapidly after its effects wore off.

Time was running out, and Xiao Lin once again converted all his attributes to agility. His Phantom Steps were activated once more, and the orcs could only see a blur in front of them. With the Miracle skill, the essence of the word 'phantom' was displayed in full view when the Phantom Steps were executed. The footwork combination allowed Xiao Lin to leave afterimages every time he made a quick move, and that was despite the huge amount of energy that would be consumed.

Individuals who had reached a certain level would not be confused by such low-level afterimages, but unfortunately, the orcs were not that intelligent. Although it was only a brief moment of effort, Xiao Lin managed to break free from the swarm of orcs after exerting all his strength. Xiao Lin went straight down to the orc commander and managed to chop off several merfolk who were trying to rush to him.

Chapter 227 - A Fierce Battle with the Commander (1)

Chapter 227: A Fierce Battle with the Commander (1)

The orc commander flashed a sullen smile when he noticed Xiao Lin's intentions. Instead of backing down, he yelled loudly, prompting the merfolk to tremble and scatter from all around him. He removed a large battle axe from the weapon rack beside him and dragged it toward Xiao Lin. Sparks were then produced from the friction rubbing against the ground.

The orc commander wanted a one-on-one duel!

Xiao Lin was pleasantly surprised since he was actually rather worried about how to deal with the merfolk surrounding him. Even though there were just weak little fry, their presence in large numbers would also be a headache.

Now that the path between the two had been completely cleared, the other orcs seemed to put a lot of confidence in their commander. Their attention was thus shifted to defense, because Xiao Lin had bought time for Cheng Ming to finally bring the others over the fortress wall.

As soon as that thought came up, the orc lifted up his battle axe with both hands and hacked down. Xiao Lin was about 10 meters away from the orc, but when the battle axe struck, a few large cracks immediately appeared on the ground and began spreading in all directions. As soon as Xiao Lin felt the slight vibration from under his feet some 10 meters away, his first instinct was to use his high agility to leap up and retreat to the stairs.

The orc grinned and accelerated all of a sudden. Despite its robust body, it shot out at an unimaginable speed, just like a cannonball.

Phantom Steps!

Although Xiao Lin was shocked, his footwork did not lag and he left an afterimage behind him. He had jumped down the stairs once more, but as soon as he settled, he noticed that his center of gravity was unstable and his body suffered from a very brief paralysis. When he looked up, the brown face of the orc commander was inching ever closer.

Xiao Lin could easily guess what would happen if the orc got a hold of him. The latter's power was absolutely terrifying and there was no way Xiao Lin could face it head-on!

Flame Bullet!

He converted all his attribute values into intelligence and fired the flame bullet with all his strength. The orc commander's approach was hindered slightly, but not much damage was caused because the orc's defensive ability against magic was actually quite strong.

Things were getting tricky!

The Miracle skill finally faded after several consecutive uses. Self-created skills could not be used continuously, otherwise Xiao Lin would not have enough strength even under the influence of the Warbear Leather Armor's fighting spirit.

Without the attribute conversion lent by his Miracle state, there were many risks in executing the Phantom Steps with his average strength. He immediately cast the Water Shield on himself, and even though its defensive effects were limited, it sufficed to reduce some pressure off the friction produced by the axe.

After several head-on clashes, Xiao Lin was clearly at a disadvantage. Although the sharpness of the Holy Soul Sword was neither the high-end nor the low-end of Bronze-rank weapons, the orc's battle axe had a long handle and possessed a rather wide attack range. The training ground was very small as well, with the axe covering nearly a quarter of the area whenever it was swung by the orc. Such a situation made it impossible to do anything.

What scared Xiao Lin most was the move's ability to paralyze him. The orc used battle axes to deliver strong hacks on the ground every once in a while, and even though Xiao Lin paid special attention to keep some distance in advance, he would still be caught by the vibration. It was a short-lived paralysis and he could not move at all during that short period of time, so the orc took advantage of its own explosiveness and rushed over.

Fortunately, Xiao Lin was also prepared. Whenever he was paralyzed, he would use flame bullets to stop the orc commander from advancing. Although the effect was limited, the paralysis did not last long either and he could break away while the orc was getting closer. Even so, continuously putting himself at risk would eventually land him into trouble.

The explosive power of that orc was too high and it was completely out of proportion to his physique. For the first time ever, even the Phantom Steps weakness was finally exposed, and Xiao Lin could not guarantee that he could constantly avoid all attacks.

A slight rubbing by the edge of the battle axe was almost as painful as getting sliced with a huge knife. After all, it was not a simulated battle. There was no health bar to determine victory or defeat, and the slightest injury had a big impact on the battle. The Warbear Leather Armor was considered weak in terms of pure defensive capabilities, and it was difficult to defend effectively against an extremely powerful orc.

After all, Xiao Lin's attribute values were down to normal in his normal state. Hurting his arm would affect the strength of his next swing, and hurting his thigh would affect the effect of Phantom Step.

Such repeated actions maintained everything in a stalemate for about five minutes, after which the balance of battle gradually began shifting toward the orc's favor. Even from the perspective of a bystander, Xiao Lin could be seen to be at the end of his battle.

Cheng Ming was dealing with a frenzied siege of orcs and merfolk on the top of the city. He did not have Xiao Lin's agility nor did he have the Phantom Steps. He could not simply use his body technique to dodge attacks and avoid the besieged enemy, so he could not possibly help Xiao Lin even if he saw the latter's crisis.

The undead swordsman Xiao Lin summoned with the Holy Soul Sword was also standing guard outside the city. The guy was unable to climb up. Xiao Lin could sense the guy's presence in his consciousness and tried moving toward the gate, hopefully to get a chance to open the door and let the undead swordsman in, but the orc commander was not stupid. Wave after wave of more urgent attacks left Xiao Lin without any room for a breather.

Xiao Lin had one thing to rejoice about, and that was his bodily injuries becoming less severe as time went on. Several relatively shallow wounds had actually stopped bleeding, Xiao Lin remembered when Song Junlang gave him the dragon blood to drink. A certain automatic healing

ability was gained after getting Elementary Vitality, and it was then that he could finally feel the powerful effects bestowed by it.

Even the orc commander could not control himself from showing a hint of surprise. He was actually more anxious than Xiao Lin, because the fortress was about to be breached. The longer he dragged on there, the worse the situation would become.

Xiao Lin racked his brains to think about whether any skill that he mastered could turn the situation around. Unfortunately, there were none. The Miracle skill could not be activated again in the near future, while Slashing was completely inappropriate for such intense battles. Furthermore, after using flame sword aura several times in a row when paving the way before, he was afraid to use it on a whim after noticing how much physical energy was used up.

There was still Replication, but that was his trump card. If he could copy the orc's paralysis skills, there might be a chance he could change the situation.

Xiao Lin hesitated a little. He raised his head and glanced at the top of the city. More and more people were coming up, and there was a steady stream of screams from the fortress. In addition to the first team brought by Cheng Ming, the follow-up team finally began to attack.

Winning was all but certain as long as time dragged on. Xiao Lin did not think that the monitors would lose if they all attacked the orc commander at the same time.

Chapter 228 - A Fierce Battle with the Commander (2)

Chapter 228: A Fierce Battle with the Commander (2)

Although Xiao Lin's Academic Genius skill has been upgraded, the interval between Replication was still five days long. Xiao Lin did not want to waste that opportunity on a whim, so he made up his mind to rely on Elementary Vitality and the Phantom Steps to hold himself during the fight. When reinforcements arrived, the orc commander would be easy to deal with.

There was nothing wrong with Xiao Lin's plan, except that plans often fail to keep up with the changes. The orc commander, who was eager to get the battle over and done as soon as possible, suddenly let out a more violent roar. His muscles expanded rapidly at a speed visible to the naked eye and he became stronger than before. The simple armor draped on his body was hardly able to withstand it.

The orc tore down his armor with one hand and tossed it aside, revealing strong brown muscles. He spoke something, but Xiao Lin did not understand what was said because he did not know Orcish.

Xiao Lin had a bad feeling and lamented the lack of information provided. After knowing that the opponent was an orc, few people had actually thought of getting a comprehensive understanding of

that race. In addition to their living habits and historical information, their favored weapons, equipment, and skills should also be included.

Sure enough, the next battle became more difficult. The orc's explosive power increased along with its swelled body. Even Cheng Ming, who had been paying attention from the city wall, became anxious.

The orc's heavy and huge battle axe was originally held with both hands, but he was later able to swing it with one hand. There had actually been a marked increase in strength rather than decrease.

After knocking Xiao Lin down to the ground once more, the orc grinned and did not rush up immediately. Instead, he walked to the weapon rack next to him and took another battle axe of the same weight.

Xiao Lin struggled to get up from the ground. He coughed repeatedly and found that his coughs were already stained with blood. A brief moment of inattentiveness allowed the orc to strike at the blind spot of Xiao Lin's Phantom Steps, but fortunately, the orc had struck too hard and there was no way the battle axe could be recovered immediately. As a result, the attack on Xiao Lin was only a punch, or else he would have died if the axe had struck him.

By then however, the orc commander had switched to wielding two battle axes. Xiao Lin no longer had the strength to let out a wry smile. The fighting spirit provided by the Warbear Leather Armor was draining constantly due to the continuous use of the Phantom Step, and Xiao Lin soon found himself in severe exhaustion once more.

It was far from a good sign. The physical stamina provided by the fighting spirit was almost equivalent to an overdraft. Once the overdrawn stamina is exhausted again, his body would fall into a weakened state and he might not be able to continue fighting for long.

"Damn it, Cheng Ming! Can't you deal with those guards quicker!" Xiao Lin yelled angrily. He felt that he had underestimated the power of the orcs. In comparison, the merfolk were not even worthy of putting their shoes on for them.

Cheng Ming could not voice his suffering too, because nearly half of the orcs surrounded him after noticing his strength. Meanwhile, the other orcs were basically attacking several monitors or instructors.

Orcs were not as mindless a race as merfolk, especially in terms of fighting instincts. To put it more bluntly, Xiao Lin and the group of improvised teams were not necessarily better than the well-trained orc infantry.

There were not many orcs in the fortress, but they were smart enough to lure the stronger individuals who attacked the city while ordering the merfolk to drive away other students. Although there were more than 100 people who had climbed to the fortress, the fight had once again entered into a stalemate. Those who had their hands full really had no way to support Xiao Lin.

With two battle axes being wielded as well as a sudden increase in power, the orc commander's attack range was wider, covering almost half of the training ground. The Phantom Step needed a

certain amount of space to move in order to avoid attacks, but when he could finally utilize the space after a continuous amount of pressure, the Phantom Steps' deficiencies were exposed time and again.

In fact, it had been very difficult for Xiao Lin to hold on until then. Basic Swordsmanship MAX, Elementary Vitality, Phantom Steps, as well as various extremely practical skills or equipment, had all contributed tremendously, as did the Warbear Leather Armor.

Unbeknownst to him however, the orc in front of him was actually a sign of respect toward Xiao Lin, for the latter was able to make him use such a level of power. The sentence that Xiao Lin could not understand earlier was not a sarcastic remark from the orc, but rather, an expression of admiration for Xiao Lin's power.

Orcs show respect toward the strong, and relatively speaking, they would also use a much stronger power to defeat a really strong opponent and take pride in victory over such an enemy.

The battle on the front of the city was equally fierce, but from time to time, everyone took note of the head-on clash on the fort's training ground. They experienced the orcs' tenacity, and dozens of people have fallen, but the battle would undoubtedly be easier if Xiao Lin could defeat the commanding officer.

Xiao Lin, who was forced into all that suffering, decided that Replication was the only skill he could use, though he was unsure whether using it would even change the unfavorable situation.

Before Xiao Lin could have the opportunity to use it, he was struck by two battle axes again. On that occasion however, the Goddess of Luck had deserted him. Even though he was only hit by the back of the axe, the violent strength threw him into the air, and the orc commander followed suit to deliver a ruthless slash.

Boom!

When Xiao Lin fell back to the ground, he landed on the hard training ground and left a big hole. Splattered blood instantly filled it, and no one knew how many scars were left by the battle axe exactly. Xiao Lin subconsciously wanted to cover the wound with the palm of his hand, but found that it was useless. A large stream of blood was still gushing out, staining the Warbear Leather Armor into blood leather armor.

Xiao Lin felt his consciousness slowly fade away and his entire body was getting colder.

That was probably how death felt like. 10 years of his life were gone just like that. It was such a shame. He did not expect to die there during the third monthly exam, and he did not know whether he could become a monitor in the end.

That was his sole thought before his consciousness became fuzzy. It soon ceased completely, and his whole body did not move at all. The orc commander exhaled, dragged two battle axes, and started walking up the tower.

After watching Xiao Lin fall in a pool of blood, Cheng Ming let out a roar and slammed the épée into the orc in front of him. He could care less about the siege and was prepared to head straight for the orc commander.

“Cheng Ming! Don’t act rashly! Xiao Lin is dead! The orc’s power is beyond what we imagined. The first thing we should do is retreat!” A ponytailed girl next to Cheng Ming immediately pulled his clothes. She was also a monitor, and her face was full of shock after seeing the dreadful battle on the training ground.

Chapter 229 - Resurrection?

Chapter 229: Resurrection?

Even if those monitors were anxious to see Xiao Lin, they had to admit that their results would have paled in comparison to him if they were the ones fighting the orc commander.

The previous landfall battle might have increased their confidence, but it was starting to shatter a little after facing the orcs’ strength. Although they were not afraid, they realized that their rash siege was somewhat reckless, and at the very least, they did not feel entirely prepared for it.

At that time, Xiao Lin—who had been stalling the orc commander—had been defeated. They all had a sudden realization and came to a very pessimistic conclusion: the hundred or so people that arrived could not possibly subdue the orc commander effectively. One wrong move and they might even be destroyed right there, and that was definitely not the conclusion they were looking to get.

Several monitors exchanged glances with each other for a while, and that woman’s final suggestion to retreat immediately received the approval of several other people. However, Cheng Ming’s popularity made him the temporary commanding officer of the assault team, and everyone ended up shifting their gazes toward him.

“NO!” Cheng Ming was helpless and angry. He was an earnest person who most certainly would not decide to abandon his teammates on the battlefield, especially when his comrade had been killed right in front of his own eyes. Despite knowing that a death in the exam only deducted 10 years out of a person’s life span, he still could not help but blame himself for it.

“Don’t be stupid! You can’t beat him! You’ve seen how strong that orc is. His explosive power is too high and he surpasses us in both speed and strength!”

“We’ve been beaten! I think we should call Chen Dao and Gu Xiaoyue over next time. Spell attacks are probably the only attacks that can have an effect on the orc.”

Although Cheng Ming’s stubbornness gave them the urge to roll their eyes, none of the others turned around and ran away after remembering how they all got along those few days. At the sight of the orc commander’s impending approach however, they persuaded Cheng Ming more and more as they became more anxious. Once the orc reached them, they might not stand a chance to run even if they wanted to.

Cheng Ming could naturally tell that the situation was not in his favor. It was very likely that all of them would die there, and even though the monthly exam was a joint battle consisting of all 12 classes, the total number of students was actually less than 800. If the main force of a hundred people, including the few acting monitors and instructors, were lost, there was practically no need to continue with the exam and they might as well just give up altogether.

Cheng Ming took a deep breath and said in a deep voice, “You guys retreat. I’ll cover for you!”

“You!”

“F*ck! What are you thinking, man!”

Cheng Ming sighed. “I have to bring Xiao Lin’s body back at least. I won’t be at ease if I don’t.”

It was unknown whether the orcs had the habit of torturing the corpses of their enemies, but if they did, the impact it would leave on the freshmen were undoubtedly very severe, almost to the point of affecting their morale. The image of a decapitated head raised high like a flag immediately popped up in a few of their minds, and they quickly shook their head to rid themselves of the fear-inducing thoughts.

Nevertheless, that thought only served to strengthen Cheng Ming’s determination. He might be easy to talk to in general, but when it came to what mattered most, he was a rigid adherent to his own principles. That was why everyone was forced to accept it even though they criticized Cheng Ming’s actions.

“Quit your nonsense! You won’t make it if you don’t leave now. Don’t worry, I won’t fight the orc head-on, but I’ll do what Xiao Lin did. I’ll maintain high mobility at all times to avoid the attacks and contain the opponent, then—”

Cheng Ming was not going to walk right to his death. He conjured up a plan in an instant, despite being unsure whether he could use his agility value to dodge as seamlessly as Xiao Lin’s movements earlier. He had only managed to finish half his sentence, for his eyes opened wide and he swallowed the second half of his sentence abruptly.

Down at the fortress’ training ground, Xiao Lin—who had fallen in a pool of blood and pronounced dead by everyone else—was slowly getting up. He then began taking small steps toward the orc commander.

“That’s impossible!” The ponytail woman beside Cheng Ming exclaimed, with her face as pale as a ghost.

“Thank goodness Xiao Lin isn’t dead!” Cheng Ming was elated.

“Impossible! It’s life-threatening for any person to lose more than thirty percent of the body’s blood, and a transfusion must be done as soon as possible. They would basically die if fifty percent is lost. Just look at the blood on the ground. No matter how you look at it, he’s lost at least half his body’s blood. He can’t possibly be alive! This has no scientific basis!” The ponytail woman probably studied medicine on Earth and made a professional assessment of the situation to prove that she was not just spouting nonsense.

Those who did not understand medicine simply rolled their eyes. Although they were a little surprised by Xiao Lin’s resurrection, it was pure nonsense to bring up the logic of Earth’s sciences on Planet Norma.

“Xiao Lin! Come here, we’re going to retreat first!” Cheng Ming immediately called out to him. From what they knew, the orcs did not understand Chinese, so there was no need to worry about them being able to understand what he said.

However, Cheng Ming’s energetic shout received no response. Xiao Lin kept his head down after standing up. His bloodstained hair was tousled, and only half of the Warbear Leather Armor was left on his body. The rest had been destroyed by the orc commander’s battle axe earlier.

The orc commander also noticed the unusual incident happening behind him. Standing halfway through the stairs, he was silent for a long time as he looked at Xiao Lin walking quietly and slowly toward him. He smirked, dragged his battle axe again, and walked back. Those warlike eyes seemed to say, ‘Doesn’t matter if you can stand up. I’ll still make you fall again, and this time I’ll make sure you definitely never get up again!’

“Something seems to be wrong with Xiao Lin,” the ponytail woman whispered.

Cheng Ming frowned and noticed it too. Xiao Lin’s non-response was not that big of a deal, but at that moment, he was exuding a very strange aura. It was hard to describe that feeling, but they all felt a little depressed and stifled, but Xiao Lin felt a little surprised.

Xiao Lin could not possibly be able to influence other people’s feelings like that. It must have been an illusion because he was too tired.

Cheng Ming did not know that everyone in the city had a slightly odd look in their faces. In fact, most of them felt that feeling.

In fact, it was not the students who were feeling that way. Their opponents, that is, the orcs and merfolk, also seemed to stagger and show an alarmed look. They seemed to put their guard up, but whatever the case may be, the subject of their wariness was certainly the freshmen who were on the verge of being driven out of the fortress.

Dawn Academy, Logistics Department.

Song Junlang was engrossed in jotting down his test records when he suddenly remembered something. He raised his head and looked at the ceiling, with a rare expression of worry appearing on his face. He muttered to himself, “The monthly exam has probably started. I’m sure that guy’ll be fine. Speaking of which, it won’t be that easy for him. I’m surprised he was able to suppress the side effects of the dragon blood’s gene until the start of the monthly exam. Looks like I’d have to study his genes a little after he returns.”

Chapter 230 - Pressure

Chapter 230: Pressure

Song Junlang dwelled on it for some time, but after so many experiments, he was actually quite confident in Xiao Lin’s tenacious vitality. After thinking about it for a while, he put those brief troubles behind him and continued recording his data.

...

At that moment, Xiao Lin was in a very strange state. His consciousness was still very fuzzy and he was unable to distinguish his own consciousness clearly. Nevertheless, one thought continued to linger in his mind, and that was to defeat the enemy in front of him at all costs.

With this extremely strong impulse, his body began to rely on instinct as it walked over slowly, with everyone looking at him in bewilderment. Xiao Lin walked very slowly and almost staggered even. His Warbear Leather Armor had been completely scrapped, but he left his Holy Soul Sword and Peakfire Staff aside even though they were completely fine. The wounds on his exposed abdomen were still clearly visible, but the bleeding had stopped and the wounds healed quickly at a speed visible to the naked eye.

The orc commander jumped down directly from the stairs. He attacked with both battle axes, but there was only a blue in front of him. Xiao Lin's figure had disappeared from his sight and reappeared again close to the orc. There, he made a fist with his right hand and launched it right at the orc's stomach.

The orc had a contemptuous smile. He admired the human's agility and ability to avoid his attacks, but the human was only human after all. Strength alone was not enough for them to beat the tough orcs, not to mention that the punch looked weak. With years of combat experience under his belt, he made no effort to evade that punch.

Thump!

The commanding officer's contemptuous smile instantly froze and his entire body was sent flying like a cannonball. He slammed into the wall behind him and the debris fell in succession. The dusty orc then fell onto the ground with a face full of shock.

Roar!

The orc felt much ashamed by it. He roared at the sky and instantly jumped up from the ground, which began shaking after he quickened his pace. His split-second explosive sprinting power was terrifying and had reached its fullest under his angered state. As long as he was in that state, he firmly believed that it was impossible for the human to escape.

Boom!

The commanding officer slammed into the city wall again. The high sprint speed made him unable to change his direction at the last minute. All Xiao Lin had to do was dodge in advance and let the orc's attack strike thin air. The orc staggered back a few steps and its gray face was overcome with shock.

Cheng Ming and the others were also taken aback. They could all see from the previous battles that the orc's strength was higher than that of Xiao Lin, yet Xiao Lin was only using his own body technique to constantly evade the attack instead of changing the unfavorable situation. What was going on? Xiao Lin had actually started to crush the orc commander after standing up again.

"Damn! Is that guy a Saiyan? His strength is stronger after resurrection!" There were many people who paid attention to Xiao Lin's battle with the orc commander. They were originally prepared to

retreat, but the situation in front of them seemed oddly strange and they hesitated again. If Xiao Lin could really kill the commanding officer, they would naturally be able to seize the fortress in one go, but if Xiao Lin failed again, they would all have to retreat.

“You’ve watched too much anime! What do you think we’re in, right now? Stop joking!” the ponytail woman replied irritably.

Cheng Ming looked uncertain and remarked strangely, “Do you really think Xiao Lin’s strength has improved?”

“Definitely. Both in speed and explosive power!”

“I know, but the increase is not as big as we thought, at least not to the point of crushing the orc commander.” Cheng Ming analyzed carefully. He had a more intuitive understanding of Xiao Lin’s strength, perhaps because he and Xiao Lin had practiced swordsmanship together before as well as battling in the simulated battle.

“I’ve fought with Xiao Lin. I know his strength very well. His sword skills are really good and I admire him greatly too, but don’t forget, he doesn’t have a sword right now!”

Cheng Ming’s reminder finally jolted the other people. The Holy Soul Sword had been tossed aside and Xiao Lin never even picked it up. The improvement of Basic Swordsmanship might increase his own strength attributes, but a swordsman’s strength was vastly different with and without their sword.

That Xiao Lin was able to suppress the orcs with pure strength was an unfathomable thought.

The battle continued and Xiao Lin’s attacks looked very simple. The skills he mastered—that is, Basic Swordsmanship, Phantom Step, or Flame Sword Aura, were not displayed at all. He simply delivered punch after punch to the orcs, but what surprised everyone was how effective those punches were.

The previous explosive speed and power of the orc commander suddenly became useless in front of Xiao Lin and could only be slaughtered like a sandbag.

“No. This isn’t right. Xiao Lin’s strength didn’t increase, but the orc’s strength has decreased!” someone suddenly whispered.

“Don’t you feel it, the battle seems to be easier than before, and I’m talking about us!”

After what he said, everyone who was still in the melee also noticed that the merfolk and orc infantry which they fought against had decreased in speed and strength, albeit very inconspicuously. In fact, the students were under the same influence as well, as if there was the constant feeling of being held back. The strange suppressed feeling from earlier continued to cloud their hearts, but it seemed to have greater influence over their opponents.

It made sense. The overall state of the orc commander must have been affected. It was not that Xiao Lin had become stronger, but that his opponent had become weaker.

Cheng Ming could not figure out why everyone's strength suddenly received some kind of restriction and was slightly reduced, while Xiao Lin seemed to be the only one that was not affected. Could the source of that pressure be caused by Xiao Lin?

That assumption was too far-fetched. Cheng Ming placed a lot of trust in Xiao Lin, but even he did not think that any of the freshmen had the ability to master such crazy skills.

In any case, the battle has indeed become much easier, and the stalemate was gradually being broken.

After a few minutes, the swollen muscles on the orc's body were gradually reverting back. Although it was unknown what skill he used, such a state clearly did not last long. The commanding officer's strength decreased further to its original state, and although he was still strong, his intimidating might had all but disappeared.

The scars on Xiao Lin's body were completely gone. In fact, the only reason why the orc was able to inflict injury on Xiao Lin was because those two battle axes had an extremely wide attack range, thus making it difficult to avoid completely.

Chapter 231 - Defeating the Orc Commander

Chapter 231: Defeating the Orc Commander

The orc commander's strength was clearly affected. Other people might find it difficult to discern the tiny details, but the injuries on Xiao Lin's body were reflected objectively. He would still be injured if he was struck by the two battle axes again, but it was no longer as deadly as it originally was.

So long as the wounds were not fatal, a burst of steaming heat immediately rose from those wounds, healing them at an unimaginable speed during which no blood was shed at all.

When the swelling of the orcs' muscles ended, the stalemate was quickly broken. The battle subsequently had a direct impact on the morale of the other orc infantry as well as the merfolk.

Those monitors were not idiots. At this juncture, they resoundingly gave up their plans to retreat and told their own team to accelerate the pace of the attacks. When united, they were the main force that could eliminate dozens within the orc infantry. Their strength was about the same with the infantry, and since the opponent's state and morale had suffered a tremendous blow, they were no longer an equal match for the students.

The merfolk were gradually driven out from the city. By then, the freshmen had finally succeeded in occupying a foothold on the fortress. Later, everyone stood guard in the city under Cheng Ming's command, while a small group was tasked to open the fortress gate immediately.

On seeing that, the other students who were still on the way up no longer made any evasive movements. Long-range weapons were no longer thrown, and even the eager Chen Dao could not wait to join the charge.

Victory was close at hand. Regardless of what mood everyone had in the beginning of the landfall battle, everyone had already begun to look forward to the victory that was within reach. The capture of the fortress meant that the first task was completed, and everyone would be credited with redemption points.

After Cheng Ming made the necessary arrangements, he immediately rushed to the training ground in the middle of the fort with several other monitors and instructors. They planned to attack with Xiao Lin and deal with the orc commander swiftly.

The orc commander was already a spent force with Xiao Lin's uninterrupted attacks. His bare brown skin had purple blotches all over but he was still standing. Xiao Lin's offensive quality was still rather low considering how he was only depending on the power of his fists. It was still considered weak against an orc that was suffering a state of decline.

"Xiao Lin, we'll help you!" Cheng Ming had arrived quickly, took out his épée and stood by the aisle, directly blocking the orc's retreat. Killing an orc commander right then and there was no doubt a great encouragement to the freshmen's morale, so it went without saying that no one intended to let such an opportunity pass.

However, Xiao Lin still did not give any response. The ponytail woman could not help but shout, "Don't pretend to be deaf. Hurry up and lead this orc to our side so we can all surround it!"

A low roar was heard, but it actually came from Xiao Lin's mouth. His head had been hanging low throughout the entire time, but he finally raised it to reveal his dull but bloodshot eyes. His gaze was that of pure and unadulterated killing intent.

Xiao Lin completely ignored the words of the ponytail woman and Cheng Ming, then rushed up again to deliver a punch. The action angered the orc, who threw away the two battle axes and sent a fist flying at Xiao Lin too. His clenched iron fists were nearly four times bigger than Xiao Lin's, and it was a pure comparison of strength.

Boxing sounds could be seen one after another, and Xiao Lin was obviously at a disadvantage. After all, his body was flesh, rather than the iron-hard muscles of the orc. After repeated punches, there were signs that his skin was going to be mangled.

Cheng Ming brandished his sword quickly and went up to help, but barely a few steps later, he suddenly stopped and leaned his body to the side by instinct. The next moment, Xiao Lin's fist swiped across his eyes. The punch was actually done terribly, perhaps reckless even, but the strong air wave produced by the fist left Cheng Ming's heart in shock.

"Xiao Lin! Have you lost your mind! How could you attack us like that!" The ponytail woman, who had probably never looked kindly upon Xiao Lin to begin with, immediately yelled angrily.

"Let's back away. I have a feeling that Xiao Lin is acting really weird!" a bespectacled instructor cautiously suggested.

Cheng Ming tried to call Xiao Lin a couple of times, but the latter still did not give any response. In desperation, he had to step back for the time being and lament, "There'll be no end to this battle if this goes on!"

Indeed, despite Xiao Lin's overwhelming advantage in the situation, his lack of fist strength was a major flaw. Even though he had an outstanding healing ability that enabled him to quickly recover every time his skin was broken, the fact remained that he was unable to deliver the final fatal blow to the orc commander.

Even the orc was tired and showed a trace of fatigue. He was appalled to see that the human before him could still maintain such a frenzied attacking rhythm.

That the physical fitness of humans could actually surpass the orcs was humiliation of the highest order. He could not accept that outcome, and anger as well as anxiety finally made him lose his mind. The spectating Cheng Ming was even more worried because of that. The orcs were a very violent race to begin with, and although they usually maintained sufficient commonsense and IQ, provocation would make them no different from beasts. More accurately, they were fiercer than the fiercest of beasts!

The mentally drained orc had even torn off the beast tooth ornament that symbolizes honor on his chest, because it would only hinder him in battle. His offensive weapons were no longer limited to his own hands, for he headbutted and even directly bit down using his sharp teeth.

The orc had only the most basic of fighting instincts left in his mind. Since the opponent was able to heal their wounds quickly, he would simply bite on the wound to see how fast the recovery was.

Such an opportunity to bite was not difficult to find. When two opposing fists collided the next moment, the orc suddenly turned his fist into a palm, grabbed Xiao Lin's arm tightly, then roared and bit down severely on Xiao Lin's neck.

The intense pain made Xiao Lin let out a low roar, despite having lost all sense of himself. He then hit the orc with his fists like a flurry of raindrops, but the orc's tenaciousness was definitely not just for show. No matter how Xiao Lin punched and kicked, the orc simply refused to let go and even kept chewing down.

The plan proved successful. After Xiao Lin's flesh and blood was trapped by the beast-like teeth, the wound was unable to heal anymore. A large stream of blood trickled down his jaw and the orc even began to suck hard.

Cheng Ming was so shocked that he no longer cared about the possibility of being attacked by Xiao Lin. He immediately raised his sword and rushed up again to try and save Xiao Lin, but midway through his run, he saw the orc commander's bite loosen all of a sudden before falling to the ground. The orc began twitching violently, and his distorted face suggested that he was enduring some great pain.

That pain did not last long though. Before Cheng Ming and the others could snap back to their senses, the orc commander had breathed his last breath and fell lifelessly onto the ground.

Chapter 232 - Taking Inventory

Chapter 232: Taking Inventory

Everyone could only stare in shock and awe, having seen the entire battle with their own eyes. The orc commander's strength surprised everyone, but the end result was even more shocking. There was no indication that the orc had died, so even Cheng Ming did not dare drop his guard.

It was only after several minutes did Xiao Lin collapse to the ground, causing Cheng Ming to rush over with a cry. He frantically checked on Xiao Lin, and realized Xiao Lin had only fainted before breathing a sigh of relief.

The other monitors and instructor went to inspect the orc's body, even stabbing it a few times for good measure. They started to fist bump each other in celebration once they verified the orc was well and truly dead. They casually asked about Xiao Lin's condition, but most of them did not care after learning that he was not dead, turning around to lead the other students into the fortress.

The battle that lasted less than an hour was finally at an end, but that was just the beginning. There was still a lot to do to clean up the aftermath of the battle. First of all, they had to treat the wounded. Before the examination, a lot of the students considered the possibility they would be injured and spent their points on recovery potions, but most of their points were limited, so the majority only had one or two bottles and were unwilling to use them unless the need was absolute.

After that, they had to deal with the prisoners. The majority of the prisoners were merfolk, since there were not that many orcs guarding the fortress in the first place, and most of them retreated the moment their commander was killed.

The problem with all the classes working together was also shown. With so many monitors and instructors with their own opinions not willing to give in, they ended up deciding on a voting system for their decisions. With Xiao Lin still unconscious, 11 monitors and 12 instructors cast their votes.

The results were not that surprising with 19 votes in favor of killing the prisoners. The reasoning was simple: they were about to engage in even more intense battles to defend the fortress, so they definitely did not have the resources to keep watch of the prisoners.

They were planning on interrogating the prisoners before dealing with them for information about the orc army, since they were completely empty handed in that department at that point, but unfortunately no one had really learned enough Mermish to do so, even though they did have some classes about it before the examination.

There were no big issues with handling the prisoners, but everyone agreed that adopting the voting approach would be the best way moving forward. Considering that there would be a lot more problems everyone needed to discuss in the future, they decided on establishing a temporary command structure for their alliance, to which everyone agreed. However, the voting rights would be kept to the monitors, since the instructors were still lower ranked than the monitors.

At that time, someone remembered Xiao Lin. They asked Qin Chuan about his condition. Qin Chuan could only sigh at the question; he was still an instructor in the end, so he could not interfere with a lot of things.

It had already been two hours after the battle, but Xiao Lin still showed no signs of waking up. The strange thing was, Xiao Lin did not have any wounds, looking even healthier than most of the

wounded. Qin Chuan temporarily took command of Class Seven, but he maintained a low profile, allowing the two group leaders, Zhou Feng and Gu Xiaoyue, to make most of the decisions.

The temporary headquarters did quite a lot for the messy alliance of classes, and the first order of business was fortifying and strengthening the fortress.

Attacking the fortress had not been too hard, even if they almost failed in the middle. The fortress had been a lot easier to take over than they had thought. However, that also meant that they would have a harder time defending it.

The decorations on the walls definitely needed to be removed, and the walls needed to be fortified and heightened. Someone also suggested building more defensive structures outside of the fortress, such as archer towers and trenches. Remembering the wolf cavalry, they also agreed that some form of defense against mounts would be needed.

There were way too many suggestions, and everyone started to vote on each matter after some discussion. Archer towers and mount defenses were approved quickly, but the other issues were faced with intense debate and did not get approved.

The opposition actually came from the NPCs, which were the engineers that came with them on the ships. Their primary task was constructing a resurrection tower so they could help the students build some defenses, but expanding and fortifying the fortress was a time- and resource-consuming task, both of which they did not have enough of.

The other point of discussion was how they would handle the supplies. This fortress was a supply depot established by the orcs, and the largest one, based on reports. The first thing they did after taking over the fortress was to open up the warehouses to take inventory.

It took quite some time to properly note down inventory. They had started the day at dawn, but it took until noon for the inventory to take full stock. Every monitor got a list of the items, and none of them could help but have excited looks.

As expected of the largest supply depot, the supplies they had were shocking. Other than massive amounts of food, there were also a large amount of weapons and equipment. It was all prepared for the orc army fighting Dawn City on the frontlines, so compared to what the students were currently wearing, they were a lot better in quality.

Everyone's mouths practically watered as they took stock, so the acting monitors did not feel safe. In the end, they decided to place guards at the various warehouses, certain that some students would try their luck in attempting to steal some things.

Those supplies were their main objective; they absolutely could not allow the supplies to fall to the orcs again. They would definitely need to use the supplies to defend the fortress later, and they would even destroy the supplies they could not use if needed.

Other than equipment, they even found a large amount of potions deeper inside. Even though the orcs lacked magicians, there were still some within their race that could use magic, which they called witch doctors or shamans. They could use elemental magic, and could also produce various potions.

They would obviously not hesitate to use these potions, but now came the awkward question. How would the twelve classes distribute these weapons and potions?

Chapter 233 - Awakening

Chapter 233: Awakening

The fortress was not too big, since the orcs probably built it in a rush—as evident from the state of the newly established buildings, but it was more than big enough for over 700 students.

Not a single class was willing to give in when it came to the supplies, so they obviously started to fight for them. However, that placed Class Seven in an awkward spot, since Xiao Lin was still unconscious. The rest of the monitors did not feel that Qin Chuan could represent Class Seven, so they ended up ignoring that class. After all, everyone understood that the instructors would no longer be related to their year after this examination.

Gu Xiaoyue did not care for the matter, but Zhou Feng was intent on doing his part as the group leader. The bald man personally rushed to the hastily-constructed headquarters. It might have been called a headquarters, but it was just a room with a table and a few chairs. An intense struggle ensued within.

The bald man looked very fierce; even Class Seven's own students were reluctant to interact with him, let alone the other classes. However, Zhou Feng was not stupid; he held on to one simple condition, which was to allocate the resources based on how much each class contributed to the prior battles.

It was undeniable that Xiao Lin contributed a lot that day. Even though they did not tally the kills, Xiao Lin still helped the other classes on the beach on his own volition, which was enough to prove his skill. Then came Xiao Lin holding down the orc commander alone when they assaulted the fortress, buying valuable time for the rest of the classes, and even landing the finishing blow on the commander.

Of course, no one was willing to concede the last fact, since the orc commander died in mysterious circumstances. Even Cheng Ming was not willing to give a conclusion.

However, as they were in deep discussion, Xiao Lin finally woke up after spending half the day unconscious, causing the students who were taking care of him to almost hug him excitedly.

To put things simply, even if it was not the whole class, at least half of Class Seven had put their faith in Xiao Lin as their class monitor. These students were actually easy enough to convince; they did not believe in Xiao Lin only because they did not trust his skill before then, especially due to his attributes when he first entered the academy.

The class monitors had a lot of responsibility, and after that examination, the class monitors would be their leaders on various tasks, even when they headed into the New World. That was why they were worried Xiao Lin would cause them trouble if his abilities were not up to par. However, after the earlier battle, especially when those who were not part of the squad attacking the fortress

witnessed his shocking battle against the orc commander, their opinions started to change drastically.

Xiao Lin opened his eyes, the bright sunlight hitting his eyes causing him to feel dizzy. He hurriedly shut his eyes, asking, “How long was I out for?”

He did not know what season it was, but it was definitely not cold. Just as Xiao Lin was about to get up for some water, he noticed a cup of water right in front of him.

Xiao Lin finally opened his eyes after getting accustomed to the sunlight. He looked at a fair and dainty hand, followed the arm as he looked up, before noticing the owner of the hand: Gu Xiaoyue—looking as cold as always.

“Thanks.” Xiao Lin gulped down the water, pleasantly surprised, but he quickly clenched his teeth, “That’s salty!”

Gu Xiaoyue pushed up her glasses. “You sweated a lot while you were unconscious, and I heard you lost a lot of blood... I found some salt in the warehouse, so I added a little.”

Xiao Lin smiled bitterly. “An isotonic drink? I get what you’re trying to do, but I think you might have added too much salt... Whatever, let’s not talk about that. Judging by our current situation, the fortress must have been taken over. What’s happening right now?”

Gu Xiaoyue was prepared, passing over a small notebook, “I’ve noted down everything that happened.”

Xiao Lin paused for a good moment before receiving the notebook. He actually felt like having a proper chat with Gu Xiaoyue since it was so hard to get anything out of her mouth normally.

However, Xiao Lin quickly shifted his focus onto the neat words within the notebook. The various arrangements that were made after entering the fortress, including the establishment of the headquarters, the prisoner situation, and discussion on the supplies were all noted down with great detail.

‘What a meticulous woman,’ Xiao Lin exclaimed in his mind. In only a few minutes, he was basically caught up with everything that had happened while he was unconscious.

He still wanted to take the chance to talk to Gu Xiaoyue, but Qin Chuan suddenly appeared. He was surprised and excited when he saw that Xiao Lin was awake, asking Xiao Lin if he had any lingering issues with some concern.

Qin Chuan had seen his battle with the orc commander, and Xiao Lin’s condition after the battle did leave them a lot to worry about.

Xiao Lin had some doubts as well. He did not remember anything after the first time the orc struck him down. At the time, he had thought his examination would end there, but Gu Xiaoyue’s notes felt like a dream to him. Not only did he survive, he even somehow exploded and completely suppressed the orc commander?

Surely they were joking. Xiao Lin definitely did not think he was some sort of holy warrior or Super Saiyan.

Gu Xiaoyue did not attack the fortress herself, so she did not know a lot of the finer details. Xiao Lin immediately talked to Qin Chuan, asking him to recount the battle.

Xiao Lin's face got weirder the more he heard. He absolutely could not believe it. He suddenly noticed an important detail, interrupting Qin Chuan as he asked, "You said that when I went berserk—yes, let's just call it going berserk for now—you felt a stifling feeling. Were you the only one that felt it?"

"No, after the matter, the other monitors and instructors said they felt it as well, but the feeling didn't last long, so we suspected it was just our imagination," Qin Chuan said.

"Oh, could you describe how you felt?" Xiao Lin felt like he was missing out on something important.

Qin Chuan was in a difficult spot. It was obvious that he found it hard to explain, even though he had a year of experience under his belt. However, he seemed to remember something, half-jokingly saying, "To tell you the truth, it felt similar to the pressure I felt when the dragon descended on us during the opening ceremony. Obviously, it was much weaker than back then."

The pressure back then was caused by the draconic power of the golden dragon, but there were no dragons around here, and Xiao Lin definitely did not think he was related to that beast in any way.

That was just a joke, and Xiao Lin smiled at it as well, but the more he smiled, the more a strange idea began to form in his head, causing his smile to suddenly disappear.

Chapter 234 - Han Manman

Chapter 234: Han Manman

"There aren't any side effects, right?"

"Uh, no. I think."

"You think?"

...

That brief conversation before the monthly examination suddenly popped up in Xiao Lin's mind. If he really was related to the dragons in any way, it would probably have been from when Song Junlang forced him to drink that bottle of dragon blood.

"Tricked again!" Xiao Lin muttered to himself, before realizing he was actually surprisingly calm about it. However, that caused him to feel like crying. Had he been tricked so much by Song Junlang that he had gotten used to it?

That was definitely not a good habit to have!

“Tricked?” Qin Chuan asked curiously.

“Oh, it’s nothing.” Xiao Lin could obviously not reveal the matter with the dragon blood. Even if he could not be a hundred percent sure, it was quietly likely his outburst was caused by that bottle of dragon blood.

However, Xiao Lin felt that it was a bit odd. Song Junlang’s various weird concoctions often had different side effects, that much he was clear of, but if it was a side effect, it should be something that was not good.

Were the after-effects of the dragon blood not quite good?

According to Qin Chuan, after he lost himself, his strength and speed greatly increased, and the most shocking thing was obviously that incomparable self-recovery ability.

“At the time, I had probably lost more than half my blood, but I could still stand up again and again.” Even Qin Chuan could not hold back his admiration. That sort of regenerative ability greatly exceeded anything a new student could possibly do, and it would not even be a stretch to say that it would be impossible to find a second person with that, even in the entire school.

With that in mind, it did not really feel like a negative side effect.

However Xiao Lin did focus on something Qin Chuan tried to gloss over, which was that he had attacked Cheng Ming!

That meant that he was unable to distinguish between friend or foe when he went berserk, or maybe in his eyes, everyone else was an enemy while he was unconscious. Thankfully, Cheng Ming was the one around at the time. The other monitors might have even taken the opportunity to do away with Xiao Lin. Xiao Lin felt like it was definitely something they would happily do.

With those thoughts, Xiao Lin finally realized the dangers of that side effect. He did not know if he would still go berserk after this, but he felt like it was definitely not something he would ever want to experience again. The monthly examination was a collaborative war effort between all the classes. The consequences would be drastic if he were to suddenly go berserk and attack everyone.

However, before worrying about being tricked by Song Junlang, Xiao Lin first needed to avoid being tricked by the other classes. Even though Qin Chuan was worried about his condition and advised him to rest up, Xiao Lin still hurried to the warehouses with Qin Chuan, where the monitors were arguing about the allocation of resources.

Everyone paused when they noticed Xiao Lin’s arrival before congratulating him for waking up, but it was obvious some of them did not say what was actually on their minds.

Xiao Lin did not bother addressing it, laughing as he accepted their well-wishes before snatching a thick notebook away from a ponytailed girl. As he looked through the book, he noticed it was the inventory list of all the goods in the warehouse.

The amount of supplies was staggering. The food primarily consisted of processed or dried meats. With the amount of meat that was stored inside, it could possibly last 800 people five whole years, so no one was fighting over the food.

As for the weapons, even though they were meant for the main orc attack force, the quality was all over the place. The orcs did not like uniformity, which was quite a bad practice. Even their weapons and equipment were all different, consisting of different looks and attributes. Their smiths would even often imbue different enhancements into the weapons as they made them.

That caused the various equipment to be of different qualities, and the new students had not really learnt how to differentiate between different grades of weaponry and equipment, but the instructors had. By their tabulations, the lowest-ranked equipment were Black Iron-ranked, and a majority of them were Bronze, but there were also a few Silver and even Gold-ranked equipment.

They had to admit that the orcs were not just a race of barbarians; the orcs also had quite a few good smiths. However, there was where the problems began to show. The lower-ranked equipment were easily distributed, and everyone would be able to get some, but what about the higher-ranked ones?

That was why they were all arguing. The Silver and Gold-ranked equipment had been picked out and placed in front of the warehouse. The armors and weapons made of special metals were very eye-catching, causing everyone to covet them, not willing to give in an inch. Due to how few there were, they would not even be able to ensure that all the instructors and monitors would get one.

“Xiao Lin, you’re still recovering, why don’t you rest. We managed to take over the fortress thanks to you holding back the orc commander, so just leave everything else to us!” That ponytailed girl did not seem like that Xiao Lin snatched the notebook away from her, but her words were full of concern.

Qin Chuan could only bitterly frown. Even as an instructor, who was on the cusp of entering the second year and was too lazy to interfere with most of the things happening among the first years, he could still see that a few of the acting class monitors were not particularly friendly. Other than Chen Dao, Cheng Ming and a few others who had a decent relationship with Xiao Lin, the rest of them did not care for him at all.

That ponytailed woman might have looked concerned, but she clearly wanted to stop Xiao Lin from participating due to his injuries. She was implying that the Silver and Gold equipment should be left to those of them who were not injured and who were able to fight with their full potential.

Xiao Lin looked up from the inventory list, pondering for a while. He felt that the woman was quite familiar, but he could not recall who she was. He stared until she started to get goosebumps before asking, “Uhm, who exactly are you?”

“You!” Her face was full of anger.

The acting class monitors were basically of the same rank, so most of them interacted with each other quite regularly. Even in the forums, they had a specialized section just for the monitors, so most of them were familiar with each other.

However, Xiao Lin actually told the woman he did not know her, even though she was also an acting class monitor. To her ears, it felt like Xiao Lin was underestimating her. They were both acting class monitors, and hence both rivals, so how could he not recognize her.

Xiao Lin maintained a low profile normally, so he did not really interact with strangers. That was amplified by the fact that he spent more than a month in New Washington out of the three months they had enrolled, so other than Cheng Ming and Chen Dao, he was not particularly familiar with any of the other class monitors.

“She’s Han Manman, Class Four’s acting monitor,” Cheng Ming hurriedly said to salvage the situation.

Chapter 235 - The First Day Passes

Chapter 235: The First Day Passes

“Huh, Silver- and even Gold-ranked equipment!” Xiao Lin could not be bothered to argue with Han Manman. He immediately went over and picked up the armor covered in silver light, feeling that it did not have the typical coldness of metal, but rather a subtle warmth. Any random passerby would be able to tell that the armor contained some mysterious energy.

Han Manman stared at Xiao Lin, worried that he would run away with the equipment. She even subtly moved two steps away, obstructing the warehouse exit.

However, Han Manman’s movement was pointless. Xiao Lin was only curious about the equipment. After observing it for a moment, he tossed it to the floor with a look of pity on his face, standing up before saying, “I recommend we destroy them.”

Everyone suddenly paused, wondering if they had misheard him, or if his mind was still not fully functioning.

“Do you guys really think we would be able to use high-level gear like these?”

“What do you mean?” Cheng Ming still had his wits about him, and he believed that Xiao Lin would not joke about something like that. He said earnestly, “Even though everyone did buy some equipment for the examination, no one could really afford the best of anything. If we used these weapons, our skills would greatly increase.”

“Surely you all know that if you use gear that is higher than your own limits, you would not be able to bring out any of its effects!” Xiao Lin laughed bitterly. He obviously wanted to use them too. After waking up, he checked on his equipment; his staff and sword were fine, but his leather armor had been completely destroyed by that detestable orc. That was worth two thousand redemption points!

Han Manman said, “Of course we know about that, but that was said three months ago. We’ve improved our skills by quite a bit since then. Even if we can’t use the equipment to the fullest, surely it would still be better than the gear we have on hand.”

Xiao Lin was getting a little frustrated. Everyone understood the idea behind it, but everyone seemed to get greedy the moment they laid their eyes on the high-level gear. However, Xiao Lin understood very well that the rules were not that flexible.

When he was in the Final Lands, that high priest manufactured countless high-grade weapons. Xiao Lin was greedy at the time as well, but the perfectly fine weapons were no different from broken ones in his hands, and in the end, he could only use the defects.

That was why Xiao Lin had no interest in the gear that was on the floor. He shook his head, not wanting to bother changing their minds anymore. He said generously, “Do what you want then. You can all have first pick. Our class will just pick after all of you.”

There were several thousand Black Iron and Bronze-ranked gear anyway, and they were more or less the same, so he was not worried that they would not have any left for themselves.

Cheng Ming looked at Xiao Lin starting to leave after losing his interest. “Where are you going?”

“I’m going to look at the NPCs.” Xiao Lin waved his hand, indicating he was absolutely disinterested in the squabble over the supplies.

The NPCs he was referring to were obviously the engineers. While the students were busy fighting over the supplies, the engineers did not stay idle. There were about a hundred of them, so they split into two groups. One group was building archer towers and various other defenses while the other group was building the resurrection tower in the middle of the fortress.

Xiao Lin’s target was the group constructing the resurrection tower. The leader was a bearded, dark-skinned, middle-aged man who was hollering at his underlings for them to prepare the materials. Everyone only knew that his surname was Yu, and that he was a captain in rank. The other information about him was scarce, probably because everyone knew he was just a simulated person, and so had no interest in him.

Xiao Lin took advantage of his rest to politely greet him, “Captain Yu, I wish to ask you a few questions.”

The man looked at him before waving his hand. “Go ahead!”

“How long does a resurrection tower usually take to complete?”

“That would depend on the area.”

“Area?”

Captain Yu rolled his eyes, saying, “That’s common knowledge! Resurrection towers are split into large, medium, and small ones, but the former two are usually limited to cities. We don’t really have that many resources with us either, so we’re constructing a small resurrection tower at the moment. It will be completely in three months at the latest.”

“Three months! Can’t you get it done faster?” Xiao Lin had an uncomfortable feeling in his heart. That was way too long of a time frame.

Captain Yu stared at him. “What do you think a resurrection tower is? This baby is basically a living skill, so not a single mistake is allowed. There are very few engineers who know how to build resurrection towers, and Dawn City definitely needs some in reserve, so even the few of us being here is no easy feat.”

At that point of history, the Law of Immortality had only just recently been established by that Russian man, so every single academy was probably busy constructing the towers wherever they could.

The man was right; as the capital of Dawn Academy, Dawn City was definitely going to be the priority, but Xiao Lin still felt like something was off, yet he chose not to comment on it.

Qin Chuan told Xiao Lin that this battle had historically failed. Even though they did not know the details of what happened just yet, if the tower was really constructed, would they really fail to defend it since they had so many chances to resurrect?

The orcs were currently in the middle of their march, so even if they wanted to retake the supply depot, they would likely only dispatch a small unit. The moment the main force started retreating, they would have achieved their goal, and at the time, Dawn City would also be able to send their reinforcements.

That meant that the supply depot was probably retaken by the orcs within three months in actual history, before the resurrection tower could be completed.

“Do we only have three months?” Xiao Lin’s heart felt a little heavy.

After that, he talked to the captain about the resurrection tower, asking about the materials and how the Law of Immortality functioned through the tower.

Resurrection towers had just recently been invented, so everyone was probably extremely interested in them. Unfortunately, Captain Yu only knew how to build them; the finer details were unknown to him. According to him, unless someone was extremely familiar with astrology, time-space studies, and the soul, they would only never be able to understand even the tip of what made the towers function.

Everyone spent their first day in the fortress quite anxiously. The distribution of the resources within the warehouses were finally settled, and it was decided that everyone would get two to three pieces of gear. It was basically distributed evenly, but there were only a little over 700 of them, so the rest of the equipment was moved to the warships, since they could not fall into the hands of the orcs. The captains would either throw the weapons into the sea or bring them back to Dawn City.

Chapter 236 - Preparing For War

Chapter 236: Preparing For War

The aftermath of the first battle was quickly calculated. Every class was either happy or in despair with their own results, but totalled up, 40 were dead from all the classes and the injured numbered

near a hundred. Out of the heavily-injured ones, over ten of them had lost all battle capabilities, basically making them no different from casualties of war.

There were way too many casualties!

That was just the first day, and because of that, the acting monitors were in a heated discussion within the headquarters. Some of them felt like the fortress was too small, and coupled with their disadvantage in numbers, they would not be able to defend for too long if they were surrounded. That was why they felt that they should begin their defense outside of the fortress—in order to delay the enemies.

However, the others felt that their foes could be the orcs' main army. Based on their earlier battle, the orcs were definitely stronger than them, so leaving the walls would be a stupid endeavor.

Everyone wanted to show off their leadership skills in order to earn a better score for themselves, since the year leader could very well be chosen from that criterion as well.

That was why the first day was filled with arguments, and Xiao Lin had joined the acting class monitors in the headquarters after he woke up as well, but he did not voice his opinion most of the time. Instead, he discussed with Cheng Ming before sending two students from each of their classes with decent archery skills to go scouting for information.

Regardless if they were going to defend the fort or attack aggressively, they still needed to get a good grasp of their opponent's power level before they took action. Xiao Lin did not know why, but he had a nagging feeling in his head, as if he was forgetting an important point, but never managed to figure out what it was.

Even though they argued nonstop, the acting monitors were still not completely clueless. They quickly issued the orders, and let their classmates carry them out.

The first thing was to place a large number of traps at the foot of the hill, as well as the path leading up. Those engineers were a big help in that department, and the resources within the supply depot were very useful as well. The traps were mainly split into two kinds. Flame traps were made using solidified animal fats and low-level flame magic materials. If someone walked on it, their feet would set it off and light up the trap.

They also had spiked traps, which used long spiky plants as the primary material. They were buried into the ground, but the spikes themselves did not do much damage. It was the poison added to the spikes that would deal most of the damage. At the same time, they made various obstacles to stop their mounts, such as large rope traps.

The students that Xiao Lin and Cheng Ming sent out did not find anything in their scouting, so the first day after they took down the fortress passed by relatively peacefully. During the night, the monitors used the meat within the warehouse to make large pots of meat stew on the large training fields. The thick smell of meat wafted through the air.

They had wanted to invite the troops on the warships to join them, but they were rejected politely. That was because they needed to always stay alert, so they could react immediately if anything happened. Those warships were also set to return to Dawn City in two or three days, which caused

everyone to be quite disappointed. Some of them had actually suggested asking the warships to continue to scout for them along the seas.

However, according to the historical schedules, the warships definitely needed to leave. Compared to that supply depot, defending Dawn City was definitely a much more important task.

The day after, the ships started to pull up their anchors and set sail, but Xiao Lin managed to locate the captain and make a small request first, which was quickly met with agreement by the latter. Thus, there was now a batch of vision-enhancing scrolls within the fortress. In this world, that scroll which had farsight, night-vision and other capabilities had replaced binoculars.

Rather than argue about how they would defend the fortress like the other monitors, Xiao Lin felt that it was more important to scout out the enemy. Even though some students had learned eagle vision, the skill's radius was still not as good as the scrolls.

Just like that, four days had passed. With everyone's hard work, over a hundred traps, big and small had been laid around the fortress. The engineers had also built more than ten defensive towers around them, but thanks to the tight schedule, those towers were just more simplistic archer and spell-casting towers that still needed to be manually operated.

No matter what, the defenses had begun to look quite impressive. The scouts Xiao Lin had been sending out still could not find any trace of the enemies, but they had still managed to draw a more or less complete map of the surroundings.

Other than the fort on the hill that was surrounded by a dense forest, the rest of the area was surrounded by vast plains. No wonder the orcs decided to establish their biggest supply depot there. In terms of transportation, it was quite easy for their wolf cavalry to reach the area.

Under Xiao Lin's constant reminders, the rest of them had begun to focus on scouting. Late into the first day, they started to build a few simple sentry towers along the major roads, since they did not have any long-range communication devices. They were like fire towers on Earth, with piles of dried grass on top. The moment any enemies were spotted, they would light up the sentry tower.

The power of collective thinking was obvious. Everyone had spent every ounce of their brain power to watch out for any possible flaws in their plans. A lot of details had gone through intense discussion, but in the end, everyone's goal was the same. The longer they could defend the place, the more benefits they would get.

After the initial anxiety, the renewed fortress and the countless defenses caused everyone to swell with pride. Thanks to the ample materials within the warehouse, as well as the skills of the engineers, they had made very good progress.

Relaxing a little, everyone could finally take the time to enjoy the surrounding scenery. Standing atop the fortress and admiring the sea below was enough to lift anyone's spirits.

Some of them would even slip away to the beach, taking advantage of the low tide to pick off some seafood. After that, they would discuss how the seafood of that world was supposed to be eaten, or even sunbathe on the beach. The air around them was definitely fresher than anything back on Earth.

The monitors had initially banned those things, but after they established their scouting system, they were confident that they would have enough time to deal with any incoming attack and started to relax their restrictions. They did not want to exhaust themselves before the orcs even arrived, and some of the monitors and instructors even joined in on the fun.

Xiao Lin had worked tirelessly those few days, even continuing to send out two squads of archers every day. In the day, his attention would be focused on the skies, not allowing any flying creatures near the fortress. Feeling like he had done all he could, he finally allowed himself to relax a little, inviting Gu Xiaoyue for a walk on the beach.

Chapter 237 - Heartfelt Talk With Gu Xiaoyue On The Beach

Chapter 237: Heartfelt Talk With Gu Xiaoyue On The Beach

Even Xiao Lin was surprised when he made the invitation. Gu Xiaoyue had stared at him for over a minute before finally nodding in agreement.

Xiao Lin did not place too much hope on it, and he was quite surprised when he got Gu Xiaoyue's answer. He immediately reacted happily, throwing away the worries about the fortress's defenses and immediately changing before leaving with her.

After the various supplies were distributed from the warehouse, Xiao Lin had naturally gotten a new set of armor. However, the orcs only had two kinds of armor: chain armor and heavy armor, which were both on the heavier side. Xiao Lin had picked chain armor, and he still had not fully grasped the capabilities. It was not too cumbersome to wear, but it was still excessive for just a simple walk.

The sun had just come out, so it was still not that hot. The cool sea breeze was very relaxing, and the remnants of the amphibious battle had long been washed away by the tides.

The two of them walked toward the sea, occasionally bumping into some fellow students. Everyone knew not to bother each other, since relaxing times like this was hard to come by, which made everyone treasure them a lot.

The silence caused the atmosphere to be a bit awkward. As Xiao Lin was looking for a topic of conversation, Gu Xiaoyue opened her mouth first, her voice clear and cool, "I've actually never actually seen the sea in my entire life."

"Oh, I've actually never seen it either. I lived in a landlocked city, and I was quite the shut-in back then. I would always be stuck at home during the holidays. Didn't even bother to travel."

"My sister liked the sea a lot. You know she likes to draw. Back when she was young, she would always draw the sea, but she would never tell me about it."

Gu Xiaoyue sighed. “She probably did not want to cause me any trouble. She knew her legs would be an issue, and back then, I would travel all over the world to find a way to cure her, so I would spend long periods of time away from home. I would always find the best maids and housekeepers to look after her before I left, but I knew I made her feel very lonely. I knew it, but I pretended I didn’t.”

The image of Gu Xiaoyue’s sister popped into Xiao Lin’s head. She seemed to be completely different from Gu Xiaoyue’s cold demeanor. That cute and active girl did not have a shred of sadness in her, even though she could not walk. Her positivity when facing life was something that left a deep impression on Xiao Lin, even though he had only met her once.

Seeing that Gu Xiaoyue had some regrets about it, Xiao Lin tried to console her, softly saying, “You two have such a good relationship with each other. I know that Gu Chengyun doesn’t blame you.”

“I know. She’s never blamed me for anything. The two of us had relied on each other since we were young, so we learned to be strong for each other. We know that no one will help us if we’re weak.”

Xiao Lin suddenly realized how Gu Xiaoyue developed her strong and individualistic personality, but he was quite unsettled. Why was Gu Xiaoyue suddenly telling him all that? He did not know what to say, and Gu Xiaoyue did not look like she was looking for any sympathy.

Thinking about what her sister had said before, Xiao Lin was more and more drawn to the two siblings. They were not the only two sisters who only had each other to rely on in the world, but the two of them were a special case. Their family was incredibly rich, being able to donate millions to the art academy. However, the two of them had extreme illnesses, despite never lacking money.

When Xiao Lin thought about Gu Xiaoyue only having two years left in her life, he could not imagine anything else causing it but her health. Thinking about it further, their parents probably abandoned them after discovering they both had illnesses that were extremely hard to manage. After that, they probably left a large sum of money for the siblings out of guilt.

Xiao Lin did not want to bring it up directly, but Gu Xiaoyue diverted the topic to her parents by herself. “To be honest, I’d never met my mother since I was young, and I can count the memories of my father on my fingers.”

Despite bringing up such sensitive topics, Gu Xiaoyue maintained her calm voice and demeanour, not showing a shred of sadness, but Xiao Lin could not help but ask, “Don’t you hate them?”

Gu Xiaoyue shook her head. “I did initially, but I slowly numbed myself to the feeling. My parents are basically nothing to me. I can take care of myself and my sister. They aren’t needed in my life.”

Gu Xiaoyue suddenly stopped on the beach, looking into the horizon before sighing. “Lately, I could not help but start to hate them again. Chengyun had always been lonely. I really don’t know how she would get on with her life without me by her side.”

Xiao Lin finally guessed what Gu Xiaoyue wanted to say, so he stopped and raised his voice slightly to show his discontent. “I reminded you earlier to not forget to buy Lifewater, but you didn’t listen! I refuse to believe that you don’t even have a thousand points to get it with your skills! Even if you don’t care about your own life, you still need to consider what your sister would feel!”

Gu Xiaoyue fell silent.

Xiao Lin took a deep breath, feeling like he had overstepped his boundaries. No matter how angry or frustrated he was, it was all in the past, so he softened his tone, “However, there’s no point in regretting it now. You shouldn’t be too down on the fact that you can’t buy any Lifewater during the examination. The exam might be a bit harder this time, but the defensive measures we currently have in place are quite good. I won’t let anything happen to you. I promise!”

Xiao Lin beat his chest as he said that. It did not matter that he was not too confident toward the examination; he refused to show weakness in front of her.

Xiao Lin’s words were faced with no reply as Gu Xiaoyue gazed quietly into the sea, softly speaking after a long while, “Even if we get through this, there is still the next time, and the time after that. You once told me I could not guarantee that I would leave every exam unscathed no matter how skilled I was, and I do agree with you, which is why I use every single second of free time I have on training.”

Xiao Lin had always thought that Gu Xiaoyue was too confident in her skills, so it was strange to hear that, “Then why do you keep refusing to buy Lifewater?”

“I did buy it before. I bought a bottle from the very first batch the school released.” Gu Xiaoyue then turned around, a wan smile on her fair face. “It was useless. That bottle of Lifewater did not raise my lifespan at all!”

Chapter 238 - Danger Approaches

Chapter 238: Danger Approaches

Translator: EndlessFantasy Translation **Editor:** EndlessFantasy Translation

The Lifewater was ineffective?

That could not be possible!

Was she joking?

Xiao Lin’s first response was disbelief, feeling like Gu Xiaoyue must have done something wrong. Lifewater relied on the Law of Immortality, which was the root of their colonizing of Planet Norma.

Dawn Academy would never trick them with something like that, and it had been three months since they had the chance to buy the Lifewater. If there were any complications, there would have been a huge commotion.

Of course, Xiao Lin did not feel like Gu Xiaoyue had any reason to lie either, so he tried to reason, “Could you have done something wrong? You could have bought higher-ranked Lifewater. I’ve heard the instructors say that elementary Lifewater was the only one that helped those with lifespans below a hundred years.”

Gu Xiaoyue shook her head. That explanation was quite unlikely anyway, since the academy could not possibly have made such a blunder. She pushed aside her hair that was messed up by the sea breeze, continuing to say, “I actually wanted to ask you for a favor.”

“You want me to take care of your sister?” Xiao Lin did not like dwelling on these hypotheticals.

“Oh, no.” Gu Xiaoyue seemed to be able to tell what was on Xiao Lin’s mind.

“Okay, then what is it?” Xiao Lin began to feel a little awkward.

“My sister’s legs can’t be cured back on Earth, but it’s a different matter over here. Ever since I came into the academy, I have been reading up on a lot of things in the library. High-leveled recovery spells can absolutely do what Earth’s technology can’t”

Xiao Lin widened his eyes in realization. No wonder Gu Xiaoyue chose to specialize in support-style magic, even with such high intelligence points. She had resolved to learn high-level recovery spells.

Gu Xiaoyue pursed her lips, her gaze looking pitiful. “I know your talents for magic aren’t that far below mine. Should I really not be able to go back one day, could you please cure my sisters legs if you ever master the necessary spells in the future?”

Xiao Lin was a bit surprised by the request. He opened his mouth to reply, but suddenly remembered that individuals above Gold rank were not allowed back to Earth, and even those who could go back to Earth had a lot of restrictions placed on them. All those restrictions were placed in order to protect the very fabric of Earth’s reality, so could Gu Xiaoyue or himself really be able to go back to Earth when they mastered that spell? If they could, would they even be allowed to use it?

Xiao Lin could not bring himself to reveal that cruel truth to Gu Xiaoyue, so he steeled his heart and nodded in agreement, consoling her, “You don’t need to be too worried. We still don’t know what the results of this examination will be. The orcs might be strong, but based on the battle we fought before, they are definitely not unbeatable.”

Xiao Lin quietly resolved himself to protect Gu Xiaoyue during this examination, no matter what happened. Even if they failed the exam and even if he needed to sacrifice himself, he would only lose a few redemption points and a mere 10 years of his lifespan. As long as he wanted to, he could always use New Dollars to get even more points to buy Lifewater. That was why he absolutely needed to ensure Gu Xiaoyue survived till the very end.

“Where do you think the orcs will attack from?” Gu Xiaoyue had already shifted topics, causing Xiao Lin to regret losing the chance to deepen the conversation.

“According to reports, the main force attacking Dawn Academy heavily consists of wolf cavalry troops. Thanks to our scouts, we know that we are basically surrounded by plains nearby, so they will probably attack from there.” Xiao Lin’s words echoed the other acting class monitors.

“Have you all considered the naval route?” Gu Xiaoyue was just a group leader, so she had not been allowed into the headquarters for discussions, and she had never willingly asked about the matter as well.

Xiao Lin paused for a moment, looking at the calm seas before saying, “It’s not like we never considered it, but we felt that it was extremely unlikely. Oh, you might not know this, but from what I’ve understood from the engineers, this sea is called the Endless Sea. It’s one of the fiercest seas on all of Planet Norma. Even our amphibious assault was carried out through a huge amount of risk, and the captain of the warships were not even willing to go any further at the time. However, we were quite lucky, and did not encounter too many difficulties during our journey.

Gu Xiaoyue understood what Xiao Lin was getting at. The orcs had no naval armies, and they could not produce warships capable of braving the seas with their level of craftsmanship; those were all details they already knew. The merfolk attacking them through the sea had been a possibility as well, but considering how dangerous the Endless Sea was, it was not a likely scenario.

The merfolk were an extremely weak race, and they could normally only live in shallow and calm seas. Even in the ocean, they had countless natural predators. To be honest, the fact that the merfolk had managed to survive for so long was a miracle. If not for their absurd reproductive abilities, they would have gone extinct long ago.

Xiao Lin shrugged. “We were worried about that initially as well, but after a lot of deliberation, we felt like it was not too likely. To be perfectly truthful, even if the merfolk dared attack us by sea, we aren’t really scared of them at all. Our real worry is the main orc army.

Thanks to the conversation earlier, Xiao Lin had placed a lot more importance on performing well in this examination. Even though he told Gu Xiaoyue not to worry, he could not help but start to wonder if they had missed anything.

Xiao Lin’s face suddenly paled, saying with uncertainty, “Actually, now that you’ve said it, I suddenly remembered the nagas. The captain had told me on the ship that he was worried about meeting the nagas on the way. If that happened, the ships could very well be wiped out.

“We never got any reports on them though.” Gu Xiaoyue furrowed her eyebrows.

They lacked understanding of the nagas on Planet Norma. Xiao Lin had asked the captain while on the warship, but he had treated it as idle chatter. Strictly speaking, that race dwelled in the deep seas, and were a common sight. They had a good relationship with the orcs and even the merfolk, but rarely participated in any wars. The nagas also rarely went on land by their own volition.

The temporary headquarters did think about that possibly as well, and they felt like the nagas were unlikely to participate in this war. Some of them even remembered that Professor Dai had said that the nagas never participated in the war against the orcs.

What if?

Was everything in the history books really correct?

Xiao Lin felt like he might be overthinking things due to his concern for Gu Xiaoyue, which caused him to once again think about something he had dismissed.

However, at that moment, a blinking ring of light rapidly headed toward them from the horizon.

Chapter 239 - A Surprising Guess

Chapter 239: A Surprising Guess

That ring of light seemed to have been from the reflection of sunlight on a metallic object. The reflection moved rapidly, quickly becoming visible to the naked eye.

Everyone on the beach was suddenly scared stiff when a fleet of silver warships appeared in the distance. The warships were sleek; the silver streaks extremely stylish, but it was obvious the ships were not from Dawn Academy.

“Go back! Return to the fortress!”

Xiao Lin reacted immediately, shouting out as he pulled Gu Xiaoyue and ran back toward the fortress. He was extremely shocked.

Who owned those warships?

Just as Gu Xiaoyue and Xiao Lin had discussed, the orcs had very limited craftsmanship abilities, so warships that could brave the seas, especially those refined looking ones, were definitely out of the question.

The merfolk and the nagas were water-dwelling races, so if they really wanted to launch a sneak attack, they would not have used warships; the same way a bird just needed to flap their wings to fly instead of going on a plane.

The fortress was also in chaos. Everyone had allowed themselves to relax after a number of days of peace, so the sudden appearance of those warships caused them to panic. The current situation was absolutely beyond everyone’s predictions.

The fortress’s gates were shut tight as everyone prepared themselves for battle, heading to the city walls with their weapons in hand. However, they could not help but be worried, especially since they had no measures against warships.

Those silver warships stopped a distance away from the shore, not showing any movement even after ten minutes, nor launching any long-range attacks. However, no one made the mistake of assuming those ships were there to sightsee.

“What’s going on?! Where did those warships come from?!” Inside the temporary headquarters, the acting class monitors shouted so loud, practically the whole fortress could hear them, but no one had the answers to those questions.

Cheng Ming was steely. Since the very start, none of them had ever considered the possibility that their opponents could have warships. Now that they no longer had the protection of the naval troops, their defense of the fortress suddenly got a lot more difficult.

“Was anyone sent to scout?” Class Four’s Han Manman said.

“How would we scout it? Do you expect us to send someone swimming?” Class Twelve’s Chen Dao answered her with an unfriendly tone.

Han Manman was annoyed. “Everyone calm down. First, let’s split our current understanding of the situation into two parts. The first part is what we learned from the captains; we should trust in the accuracy of that information for now. The other part is what we learned from our history lessons, which we should definitely put our faith on. After all, history already happened, so surely there shouldn’t be any problems.”

“Han Manman, are you trying to say that the warships might not be enemies?” Cheng Ming answered.

“That’s right. Based on history, there were no other races that participated in the war other than the orcs and the merfolk; not even the naga. The orcs couldn’t have built these warships, so if we take all that into account, the warships might not have evil intentions.”

“That doesn’t make sense!” Chen Dao had his doubts regarding Han Manman’s guess, slightly mocking her as he said, “Did you just ignore your geography classes? Don’t forget, other than the orcs and merfolk, there are no other races near Dawn City.”

Han Manman was furious. “Then why don’t you tell me who owns those warships outside!”

Chen Dao was temporarily stumped.

As they were furiously arguing, the door to the headquarters was suddenly pushed open. Xiao Lin walked in with an exhausted look on his face, taking a deep breath after he sat down.

Han Manman and the rest of them were slightly surprised. No one had noticed that they were actually missing one monitor during the meeting, but that was likely due to the fact that a number of them did not regard Xiao Lin as higher.

Xiao Lin’s next words caused a lot of shock. “I think I know who owns those warships.”

“Who?!”

“The elves!”

“What?”

“The elves! Don’t give me those looks. The marks on those warships are definitely elven. Of course, the marks could very well be faked.” Xiao Lin tossed a used magical scroll on the table that he had just used the scroll to scout earlier.

“How do you know what the elven mark is?” Han Manman said in her sharp voice.

“I’ve been to New Washington, and a lot of elves do business there; that’s where I’ve seen it. They love to carve the Tree of Life onto everything, even small ornaments.”

“Tree of Life?”

“Yes, according to legends, the Tree of Life gave birth to the elves. They respect that thing a lot; it’s basically god to them.” Xiao Lin recalled. When he was in New Washington, he passed by elven stores regularly and had asked about it before.

“That makes no sense either! Even if those really are elven warships, why are they here? Did they get lost?” Han Manman still refused to believe it.

“You’ve seen the elves?! It’s that race full of beautiful women, just like in fantasy novels, right?” Chen Dao’s eyes suddenly widened, but he had shifted his attention to something else completely. Everyone else rolled their eyes, ignoring him.

“Actually, I do remember the elves having a good relationship with the Americans.”

“How long would it take for the elves to get here?”

Even though everyone paid attention in their history and geography classes, that detail was not something anyone could answer, so they shifted their gaze to Xiao Lin. Even if they verbally denied it, all of them had some amount of envy toward the fact that Xiao Lin had been to New Washington.

“A warship from New Washington to Dawn City would take at least one month. With the technology of this era, I feel like it would take at least two to three months. I’ve never been to elven territory, but since they’re close to the Americans, and also just as close to the sea, it would probably take the same amount of time,” Xiao Lin said.

After that, everyone’s expressions changed. It took at least two to three months to get there from elven territory, but they had only taken over the fortress for less than five days.

If those warships were really elvish, then unless they were just passing by, it would be quite a big issue. They started to feel like everything they had been doing from the start had been a trap.

This particular mission had been noted down as a failure in the history books, and in the final records, there were no indications that elves had appeared. At the same time, this mission had barely appeared in the history books. Just as Qin Chuan had told Xiao Lin, the academy might have tried to cover up this operation out of humiliation.

Chapter 240 - Start of The War (1)

Chapter 240: Start of The War (1)

Tragedies never came alone. As the acting monitors were busy arguing among themselves, someone rushed into the headquarters, reporting that the fires on the sentry towers had been lit.

Everyone had already been in a bad state of mind before that, and the sentry towers being lit could only mean one thing: their enemies were approaching. They might have erected the towers as an early warning system, but no one was happy that it worked.

The entire fortress had already been in a state of frantic chaos. They had already done a lot of preparations before that, so it was not like they were not prepared mentally, but the current situation was out of their expectations thanks to the silver warships.

The fact that the elves had yet to make a move after stopping in the distance gave them some amount of comfort. Not only did they refrain from firing any long-ranged attacks, they had yet to even send someone to shore. Someone had suggested that they should have sent an envoy as an attempt for diplomacy, but the sudden appearance of the orcs caused them to abandon the plan for the moment.

It did not matter what stance or attitude that fleet of warships had toward Dawn Academy, so long as they maintained their distance until the end of the examinations.

Even though most of them felt that that approach was not realistic, they currently had no better options available to them.

The scouts they had assigned quickly returned. The defensive measures they adopted worked out quite well, assigning scouts to the sentry towers with the vision-enhancing scrolls to keep watch. The moment enemies were sighted, they would first light up the sentry towers before running back to make a report themselves.

Just like they expected, the army that was currently heading toward them was a unit of orcish wolf cavalry, but the numbers were not that high. According to the scout's rough estimate, there were about three to four hundred cavalry troops, but following them was an army of almost 3,000 fully equipped orc foot soldiers.

"I can understand the cavalry, since it's not that hard for them to arrive fast if they went at full speed, but I don't understand how the foot soldiers managed to arrive at the same time." Xiao Lin stared at the scout, hoping to verify his report.

"Hey! The scrolls were given by you. How could the report be wrong!" The scout was from another class, so his monitor naturally protested when Xiao Lin questioned him.

Xiao Lin shook his head. "I'm not trying to fault him; it's just very strange. I prioritized scouting so much earlier in order to get a better grasp of our enemies, and we definitely did not get any reports of an orcish encampment nearby. Where did all those foot soldiers come from?"

"From the nearby forest?" Cheng Ming asked hesitantly.

"That forest is quite small. If they came from that direction, we would have noticed them sooner."

"What if they had always been hiding there, biding their time and waiting for the cavalry to arrive before attacking together?" Xiao Lin's words caused everyone to pale.

If his guess was true, then did the orcs always know they would stage an attack on this supply depot?

With that heavy thought in their heads, everyone awaited the enemies along the fortress walls.

It was noon when someone suddenly shouted, "They're here!"

The impressive orc army began to march closer. This time, it was an army composed purely of orcs, without any useless merfolk accompanying them. Xiao Lin and the other monitors had already used the magical scrolls to get a better look at the army.

Boom!

They had prepared a large number of traps at the foot of the hill. The wolf cavalry charged, triggering the flame traps below. Those traps that were made with easily combustible materials quickly unleashed extremely hot flames on the orcs. Even if the orcs had thick skin, they were still unable to withstand being constantly burned by magical flames. Furthermore, wolf mounts were beasts that were naturally afraid of fire.

As the flames roared, wolf cavalry's formation started to go into disarray as the mounts panicked. However, the orcs were very disciplined. They knew that if they slowed down at that moment, they would disrupt the incoming foot soldiers. Not only did the vanguard not slow down, they even started to speed up.

Everyone was surprised at how battle hardened the orcs were. Those mounted troops may have been armored, but they still lacked defenses against magic. The flames continued to burn them, causing the thick and heavy armor they wore to heat up rapidly in the process. Thanks to the magical scrolls, Xiao Lin could even see the steam rising out of the armor, and involuntarily shuddered as he felt vicarious pain from just looking at it.

Even with that against them, the orcs did not retreat. Their faces were filled with bloodlust as they ignored the flames and injuries as they brandished their weapons and charged toward the fortress.

However, they had more traps set up. After the flame traps were the spike traps. Those poisoned hooks dealt a fatal blow to the heavily-injured orcish cavalry.

The poison had been found in the supply depot, and none of them actually knew how strong it was. They could not see that the effects were quite good as the wolf mounts that were poisoned started to roll around on the floor, spasming as they started to froth out of the mouth before giving out their last breath.

The dismounted orcs did not do that well against the poison either. They did not manage to hold on for long before ending up with the same fate.

The army of wolf cavalry troops charging at them was a fearsome sight, and most of the students in the fortress had only seen such a thing in movies. A lot of them could not help but cower in fear at the sudden sight of that show of force.

However, it took less than twenty minutes for that army to be eliminated. Only a few of them could even stand up, leading to cheers from the students. The traps that they had spent their days laboriously setting up finally paid off.

"They really underestimated us!"

"So what if they're orcs? They still died in the end!"

"Hahaha, we might actually be able to hold down this fortress!"

The effectiveness of the traps managed to raise morale some, but these inexperienced soldiers were still very easily swayed.

No matter what, their opening salvo had led to a lot of satisfaction, but a small minority only got more worried after.

Chapter 241 - Start of The War (2)

Chapter 241: Start of The War (2)

“These orcs are ferocious!” Xiao Lin sighed as he shook his head. He shut his eyes to relax them after the magic receded.

Han Manman took offense to his negativity, mocking him, “Did that already get you scared?”

Cheng Ming could see why Xiao Lin was worried, since the defenses had mainly been handled by Xiao Lin and himself. His face was full of worry as well. “Since we did not have that much time, we did not actually manage to get a lot of traps down. It’s worrisome that eighty percent of our traps were used up just now.”

Han Manman paused before retorting, “We still managed to eliminate about four hundred wolf cavalry troops, and the material for those traps were all from the orcs’ own supplies, so we did not suffer any losses at all!”

Xiao Lin smiled bitterly, not wanting to mock her for her shallow view on the war. He explained, “Don’t forget what our mission is; it’s to defend this fortress no matter what and to not let our enemies seize it back. That way, we should destroy their supply line and cripple their attempt to attack Dawn City. I had originally thought that those traps would be enough to at least hold down the orcs for a week with the help of long-range support.”

“Those troops earlier deliberately sacrificed themselves to clear the way for the incoming foot soldiers! Troops that aren’t afraid of death are the hardest to deal with!” Cheng Ming said as he sighed again.

The orcs used their cavalry as sacrifices to ensure that the traps were cleared. Even if the fortress was still unharmed and the orcs looked like they had suffered massive losses, Xiao Lin and a few others were not happy about it. The orcs used their lives in exchange for time; they might have lost four hundred soldiers, but Xiao Lin’s side had lost an entire week of time!

After that, the foot soldiers slowly marched forward; over three thousand orcs completely broke formations, not caring about any strategies as they charged forward to attack.

Xiao Lin had a sudden thought and turned around to look. The fortress was actually not in a great location. In front of them was the plains, and their backs faced the Endless Sea. Those silver warships seemed to be closer than they used to be, but they still quietly stopped there, as if they were just spectators.

However, Xiao Lin had a sudden realization. He suddenly understood that it did not matter if the warships were actually from the elves; their goal was not to participate in this battle, but rather to cut off their retreat route!

If Xiao Lin and the others had wanted to retreat, they definitely could not retreat through the front, so the biggest possibility was leaving by sea. The orcs wanted to make sure all of them were killed!

Xiao Lin's heart was suddenly filled with even more questions. There was just too much he could not understand. From what he knew of the elves, they were a peace-loving and lazy race. Even though the elves and the orcs had no ill will toward each other, they were absolutely not friends, let alone allies. To add to that, Dawn Academy had never once offended the faraway elves.

"The orcs are coming!" Cheng Ming saw that he was distracted and hissed out a reminder.

Xiao Lin shook his head, pushing his thoughts to the back of his mind and making sure his full focus was on this defense. Gu Xiaoyue's situation meant that he was absolutely not allowed to make any mistakes during this examination. Even if the orcs and the elves had a secret agreement, that was still in the past. This was just a simulated examination.

"I'll go help out the spell-casting towers; you take care of the fortress!" Xiao Lin cried out to Cheng Ming before hastily leaving the fortress. His actions caused the other monitors a lot of confusion.

The defensive towers were all on the slopes outside of the fortress because the fortress itself was not very large. The fortress was not very fortified by itself either, so if they were to be surrounded early, it would be hard to guarantee that they could defend it for any length of time.

Those defensive towers all needed to be manually operated, which meant they had to send a portion of their men out. It was a task that no one wanted to do, since everyone could see that the defensive towers would be the first to fall when the orcs attacked, even if those towers were the best way to delay the orcs.

The acting class monitors were in difficult positions, since they had to maintain strict discipline within their respective classes. They wanted their orders to be carried through, but any riskier tasks were hard to voice out, since it would invoke negative sentiment.

Xiao Lin was actually leading by example. He voluntarily headed out of the fortress under a few hundred shocked looks. The defensive towers were split into ones for archers and spellcasters, and he had obviously gone for the spell-casting ones, since Xiao Lin had zero confidence in his archery.

However, a few acting class monitors were unhappy with his action, especially after seeing the other students looking at Xiao Lin with looks of admiration. It was not like they did not think about heading into battle themselves, but they felt that if they died early and it affected their assessment, it could very well affect the final selection for the year leader. No matter how friendly they acted toward each other normally, each of them still had their own goals and ambitions.

There was another reason as well, which was that some of them could not use the defensive towers at all, such as those who were specialized in melee combat.

However, Xiao Lin did not have any of their considerations. After listening to Gu Xiaoyue's wish on the beach, he had long since abandoned any sort of needless forethought.

After all, in Xiao Lin's eyes, being a year leader, earning points or credits, and even officially becoming the class monitor were all not nearly as important as Gu Xiaoyue's life.

That was why Xiao Lin could head out of the fortress without even hesitating, even if some people like Wang Dalin rudely remarked that Xiao Lin was just putting on a show for everyone else, mocking him for being a sham.

However, most of the other students had actually given a big thumbs-up to Xiao Lin in their hearts. The students of Class Seven even strengthened their belief in him as their class monitors, rebuking Wang Dalin's words. "Instead of spouting nonsense here, why don't you put on a show as well?"

All that did not factor into Xiao Lin's thought process at all. After he went on the tower, Xiao Lin inspected the equipment around him. It was a defensive tower, so it would obviously not be as simple as a platform to pull their bows or cast spells from.

Chapter 242 - Start of The War (3)

Chapter 242: Start of The War (3)

The spell-casting tower was actually more of a magic gathering device. The whole tower was constructed with magical runes around it. Spellcasters only needed to use their own concentration to activate the runes, which would then fire out the readied spells.

High-level spell casting towers could actually wield very powerful magics, but it was regretful that they were short on time and could only erect the simpler towers; even that was only thanks to the engineers working at their maximum pace.

Xiao Lin gently touched the black and glossy metal that the magical guidance unit was made of. The magical guidance unit used magic to hone in on enemies. The principles were all part of third year courses, but Xiao Lin did not need to understand the theory behind it at that moment; he only needed to know how to use it.

They had received a crash course on how to operate it from the engineers two days before. It was not hard to use. Xiao Lin put both his hands on the sleek metal board, and after a flash of light, the magical guidance unit started to heat up.

The unit's point of fire was also very unique. It looked nothing like a cannon, but rather like a flat and long silver piece of metal. The inside of the magical guidance unit was rapidly changing, and in the blink of an eye, the piece of metal had turned red. The color rapidly deepened and was very bright. After that, Xiao Lin felt his hands, which were on the metal plate, start to shake as a shocking stream of air gushed out from behind the tower.

If it was not for the fact that the top of the tower was sealed off, Xiao Lin felt like he might have been blown away by the air. He could not help but remember that the engineers had reminded them that due to the lack of time, the spell-casting towers lacked a lot of parts, such as cushioning devices.

As the firing plate began to glow with enough brightness, the deep red light shot out of the plate. Just like a laser, it exploded among the orc soldiers.

At least four to five of the orcs splattered in that moment, their flesh scattering all over. The thick armor that they wore seemed like paper against an attack from the spell-casting tower.

The offensive power of the tower had shocked the new students, even invoking a great deal of curiosity in them as they started to head out of the fortress and toward the towers.

However, the spell-casting towers were very limited, only consisting of less than one-fifths of the defensive towers around. Most of the towers were archery towers, which were equipped with large crossbows or rapid firing bows. They were less powerful than spell-casting towers and also had less radius of attack.

However, the archery towers could attack rapidly and, in comparison to spell-casting towers, had complicated mechanisms that needed the metallic plates to be switched around after every shot. Captain Yu, the engineer, had told them that the metal plates for these lower level spell-casting towers were perishable, and needed to be switched often or they would overheat, causing the next shot to have a higher chance of destroying the tower and killing the user.

Xiao Lin was definitely not willing to take that risk, hurriedly beginning the reloading process after he shot the first shot. It was the first time he did it, and his movements were clumsy. The metal plate that had just been used was extremely hot. Even if they had prepared clear water in the defensive towers, the reloading process was still quite cumbersome.

After Xiao Lin had led the way, the other defensive towers started to join the attack. The archery towers were much easier to use, sending large arrows into fray. The ones operating the crossbows were all archery course students, so their accuracy was far better than everyone else. However, the large crossbows had a major inconvenience, which was that they were slow to move. Thanks to the fact that the orcs started to cover a wide area after dispersing their formation, the archery towers did not need to move their bows a lot.

The rapid firing of their arrows somewhat mitigated the lack of area damage the arrows provided. Thanks to the fact that they discovered a huge stock of large arrows in the supplies, they did not even need to think about conserving their ammunition.

Even though the spell-casting towers had a long delay between each shot, every attack dealt a shocking amount of damage. These spell-casting towers primarily used fire magic, so the burning effect had set the tall grass on the plains aflame, delaying the advance of the orcs.

Those standing in the fortress were not idle either. Everyone started to use all the long-range weaponry they had. Even those who did not take any archery courses were utilized, since they could at the very least pull a bow. As long as they fired en masse, the accuracy did not matter. The orcs had a few thousand troops, and as long as they shot toward the sea of orcs, they could still randomly hit a few enemies.

The orc army was just as frenzied as earlier. Xiao Lin had personally witnessed quite a few orcs with arrows stuck in their bodies, one of them even missing an arm, still charging up the hill undeterred.

On the surface, it looked like Xiao Lin and everyone else had managed to suppress the orcs the entire way. Even if the wolf cavalry had used up their traps earlier, the orc foot soldiers that followed did not seem to have anticipated that they would be faced with such a concentrated attack. The orcs probably never anticipated that they would be able to erect so many defensive towers in just a few days.

Dawn Academy definitely put in a lot of preparation for this mission. The engineers that followed them were all the elites of Dawn Academy. On one hand, they were sent there to build the resurrection tower, and on the other, they were perfectly willing to divert a portion of their resources toward defending the fortress. The other students all knew how difficult and important the examination was, so no matter how much they complained, no one dared to slack off during the construction.

Without a doubt, the orcs seemed to have anticipated Dawn Academy's amphibious assault. However, they did not seem to have anticipated such a fierce defense. They were definitely very formidable, and the orcs did not show any signs of stopping for the entire afternoon. Wave after wave of them continued to attack as the corpses on the road started to pile up.

Xiao Lin did not know how many metal plates he had gone through, but he had long used up water in the tower. He was definitely unable to retrieve any water in the heat of the battle, but he suddenly remembered the Water Shield spell he learned before the examination.

The spell used a solidified water shield to defend himself, but using the water shield to cool down the metal plates was actually a lot more convenient. If the shield did not get attacked, it could sustain itself for several minutes, and Xiao Lin could even use it continuously.

Chapter 243 - Injury

Chapter 243: Injury

Another big difference between spell towers and archer towers was that the user must utilize their mental power to power up the spell tower's equipment. Although the energy consumption was much lower than a normal spell, it was still a considerable amount if used for a prolonged period.

Even if Xiao Lin activated his Miracle state and transformed all his attributes into intelligence, he would still be unable to relieve himself of his mind's fatigue.

The spell tower that Xiao Lin operated held up until the very end and continued firing out flame bombs. It was difficult for other people to sustain their mental power until the final moment and some even fainted right inside the tower.

The spell tower's misfiring took some pressure off the orcs, and as a result, the fortress finally began to suffer casualties. The orcs used their numbers to pave the way, and despite the arrows and flames raining from the sky, the gentle slope of that low hill made it impossible to avoid the orcs' fast-approaching onslaught.

The outermost archer tower was the first to fall. The orc infantry wielded huge battle axes that were much taller than usual. The difficulty of guaranteeing the quality of those hastily-built

defense towers had already been mentioned, and it was not that the architects cut corners on purpose, but rather, they had no choice. Their main task was to build the resurrection tower, and they were only given five days to do so.

The orcs who rushed forth while risking their lives. They raised their huge battle axes and slashed toward the archer tower, roaring frantically. Those nearby the tower did not hesitate to drop their large crossbows in a panic and used their long-range weapons to shoot the orcs with all their might. Unfortunately, the archer tower's collapse could not be stopped.

Those orcs used the most primitive of methods to destroy the defense tower. It was simple but effective, though they also paid a very heavy price for it.

The corpses near the fortress had not been properly counted yet, but the number of bodies on the hillside demonstrated that the orc army must have lost a lot of members. Even so, one could not help but admire their tenacious fighting spirit. Whenever Cheng Ming and the rest thought that the orcs would retreat after suffering so much losses, they ended up having to face another wave of desperate attacks.

Finally, the orcs began receding from the area they covered as soon as the sun moved to the west. From what the students knew, the orcs were a race that disliked night battles. Light pollution did not exist in Planet Norma, so in the absence of any lighting equipment, it was completely pitch-black when night came. The orcs' vision was very poor at night.

"It's over!" someone shouted from the fortress.

"The orcs have retreated!"

"We won!"

Their defending lasted half a day and finally came to an end in the evening. Loud cheers were soon heard across the entire fortress. Compared with the landfall and the siege, that afternoon's battle was undoubtedly much more difficult, and the orcs were truly a force to be reckoned with. As a result, their elation was much more intense when they tasted victory.

Xiao Lin, who was sitting paralyzed in the defense tower, had no strength to get up. He could only sigh slightly after hearing the cheers outside. "Victory? This is just the beginning!"

Xiao Lin glanced at his hands. Both of them were reddened and full of burn marks. He did not even dare to walk down the tower at that point since he had to hold the stairs with his hands. In that current situation, his hands could not possibly be able to support him because the slightest touch would result in searing pain.

Although the Water Shield could be used in place of water for its cooling effect, it required an enormous amount of mental strength to use. Xiao Lin was wary of continuing to use it simply because he wanted to be able to perform one more attack with the spell device.

Indeed, when the battle was drawing to a close, Xiao Lin changed the replacement metal sheet from the emission ports using only his bare hands. God knows just how high the fired-up temperature of the metal piece was, but there was never a moment of hesitation from Xiao Lin. He simply gritted his teeth and got on with it.

When the battle finally ended, Xiao Lin looked at his bloody hands. He winced at the pain coming from his fingers and his heart, but at the same time, he could not help marvel at how much willpower he had at the time.

Xiao Lin lay quietly in the spell tower until the sound of footsteps was heard ascending the tower. In a daze, Xiao Lin's subconscious mind was alerted and he reached out to draw his portable sword. It was not until Cheng Ming's earnest and concerned face appeared that he felt relieved. Cheng Ming was about to say something when Xiao Lin's mouth opened up to let out a blood-curdling scream.

His right hand, which had finally stopped bleeding, suddenly became bloody again after holding the hilt of the sword earlier. Cheng Ming climbed up the spell tower and saw the discarded metal pieces all over the tower, as well as the smoke lingering at the launch port. Having received training in the use of defense towers, Cheng Ming did not take long to put two and two together. There was horror in his eyes, and without further ado, immediately carried Xiao Lin on his back and ran.

After going down, Cheng Ming's thunderous voice practically reverberated within the small fortress. "Doctor! Where's the doctor! Hurry up and get me a damn doctor!"

Cheng Ming was a frank person who never lost his temper, and it was even more unlikely for him to swear. The others were quite perplexed when his tone suddenly turned irritable, but they acknowledged the reputation of that popular class monitor and someone soon took the initiative to lead the way.

There were no doctors there, only healers who came with the ship. Like those architects, they were also NPC-like characters. The actual combat operation in the past must have had similar equipment, but none of the freshmen had learned any treatment methods because they were still new to everything. In any case, perhaps that was how the academy wanted to improve the freshmen's strength.

There were about 20 healers, and everyone already knew that the healers' rank was roughly equivalent to Black Iron and Bronze.

Few casualties occurred on the fortress side during the afternoon's defensive battle, as the orcs were suppressed by the defense towers throughout the entire process. Even as the battle line progressed and the outer archer towers began to gradually suffer losses, the defenders at the front of the city were not affected that much.

The biggest casualties still resulted from the orcs' long-range throwing weapons. Their strength was a bit troublesome to deal with, but it weakened when they were some distance away. For example, when the orcs realized it was getting more difficult to approach, they simply started throwing their weapons while still near the foot of the mountain. Few people actually died and most suffered only minor injuries.

Those on the fallen archer towers were in no such luck. Based on preliminary count, no one survived from the archer towers that had been lost in the periphery.

Of course, the interim group leaders did not dare to release that information publicly for the time being, as they were afraid no one would be willing to go out and defend the tower the next day.

Chapter 244 - The First Day of Defending the Fortress Comes to An End

Chapter 244: The First Day of Defending the Fortress Comes to An End

Xiao Lin's injury was considered one of the more serious among those who suffered heavy injuries. The healers diagnosed it as severe burns after a simple glance. Though it would be difficult to treat on Earth, they were on Planet Norma.

Xiao Lin did not even use the healing potion he carried with him, since it was way too precious. He did his best not to drink it that afternoon after considering that the battle had just begun.

In the end, the healer sprayed a kind of ultracold water on his hands. It had a faint fragrance and was somewhat sticky to the touch. His hands were then wrapped with a bandage and he was told that it would take two days to heal fully. In the meantime, he should not be holding any weapons.

A temporary camp for the wounded battalion was set up on the training ground, but since everyone's injuries were not very serious, they chatted casually with each other while waiting for the healers' busy treating. Most of them were bragging about how brave they were in battle, how they were seriously injured but continued to draw their bow and shoot arrows, or how many orcs they killed.

Someone immediately expressed skepticism and said, "How do you know how many orcs you killed? Did you still have time to count when there were enemies all over the hill at that moment?"

The person who had just boasted about his achievements immediately raised a small book. After opening it, one could see that the word 'strike' had been written countless times. He proclaimed proudly, "I make a record whenever an enemy is confirmed dead."

"If you've saved that bit of energy from making that record, you might have been able to kill more orcs," Xiao Lin's ears picked up on the conversation and he interjected helplessly.

"Aren't you Class Seven's monitor?" The young guy who had been called out chuckled awkwardly and was immediately able to guess Xiao Lin's identity after realizing that the latter's face was somewhat familiar.

Xiao Lin probably had not realized that he was actually a small-time celebrity. Many people got to know about him before the monthly exam. Xiao Lin's reputation among the freshmen was not that good initially. His impression was defined by everyone as 'the loser acting monitor of Class Seven.' In addition to his short absence, everyone gradually began forgetting his existence.

Cheng Ming's talkativeness ensured that the details of Xiao Lin's injury spread gradually within the fortress. The fact that Xiao Lin took the initiative to walk out of the fortress at the beginning and ascend the defense tower made everyone admire him all the more.

The body count of that afternoon's battle was also complete. Since the orcs would not take the initiative to attack at night, the monitors from the temporary headquarters took advantage of the orcs retreat and organized some people to head out for the purposes of cleaning the battlefield.

Flames continued to burn in the grassland, and black beacons of smoke lingered in the sky. The dark red blood, along with the incomplete corpses of the orcs, painted a horrifying picture. Originally, the monitors were worried about whether those corpses were still in the process of dying or perhaps even laying there and feigning death. Everyone was urged to be especially careful, and anything deemed suspicious should first be given a few slashes before proceeding with anything else.

In fact, no surviving orcs were encountered during the cleaning process, which lasted for more than an hour. Every orc fought hard and only fell down until they lost their last drop of blood. The intensity of that afternoon's battle could be felt while walking amidst those gruesome corpses.

After a rough count, the number of orcs killed in that charge exceeded 600, accounting for nearly one-fifth of their troops. Those who were wounded when they retreated were not yet taken into account. The acting monitors were fairly satisfied with that data. If that was the number, then they would be able to completely wipe out the orc infantry team in just one week.

After Xiao Lin was all bandaged up, he sat briefly in the camp for the wounded before going back to Class Seven to check on the situation. Luck was on their side, for throughout the entire afternoon, only three of the students were killed by the thrown spears. The others had slight bruises, but none had any serious injury. However, although Xiao Lin was ostensibly visiting his classmates, his main purpose was actually to make sure that Gu Xiaoyue was safe.

The sight of that girl sitting coldly there gave him a sense of relief. Xiao Lin then found out all about the battle in the afternoon through Zhou Feng, the baldy who looked tough as nails.

As Xiao Lin interacted more with him, he gradually realized that Zhou Feng was also a trustworthy person.

There was nothing much to say since everyone was guarding the city, but Zhou Feng privately expressed some worry about the battle privately to him. Although they all had the upper hand in the battle that afternoon, the orcs' fierceness had actually taken them by surprise.

The most formidable armies were the ones that had no fear of death. In fact, the students were already at a disadvantage after the archer tower was destroyed and the spell tower started misfiring. However, the orc commander might have stopped the attack after considering the circumstances of the casualties and was perhaps reluctant to engage in night battles.

Xiao Lin and Zhou Feng happened to hold the same view on that. Based on that day's trend, it was hard to determine the result of repeated onslaughts. The commanding headquarters' optimistic estimate of wiping out the group of orcs within seven days was purely conjecture.

"Old Xiao, is guarding all we can do? I mean, we've already told the fleet to move everything that can be moved. We can just burn whatever we can't bring away. What's important is we bring all the necessary food when we leave." Zhou Feng was still not used to addressing Xiao Lin as 'monitor' and usually called him 'Old Xiao'. Xiao Lin did not mind it in the slightest and felt that it was much less impersonal.

Zhou Feng's proposal left Xiao Lin a little surprised.

Zhou Feng continued, "I know the rewards for this mission are very generous, but I don't think it's more cost-effective compared to a ten-year life span. From what I see, some people are smitten by these temptations and don't even understand what's at stake!"

Xiao Lin understood what Zhou Feng wanted to say. According to the standard of reward for the second task, they were able to get 20 redemption points for every day they remained there. The price of a bottle of primary Lifewater was 1,000 redemption points, which meant that the minimum number of days they had to remain there was 50, after which it would be enough to break even if they died.

It was only the sixth day, including that day. That amounted only to one tenth of the time. With nine tenths of time left, no one could guarantee what would happen next.

Retreating might be a good idea if they were in a war on Earth, but unfortunately, that was not the case. Xiao Lin pointed to the resurrection tower that was being built some distance away and sighed, "Remember, the resurrection tower is our foundation in the New World. We'll be invincible as long as the resurrection tower exists. This is why the architects came here. We can't abandon this supply depot, and especially not the resurrection tower!"

Chapter 245 - Xiao Lin's Suggestion

Chapter 245: Xiao Lin's Suggestion

After Xiao Lin had a simple meal with Class Seven, he proceeded to leave. The dinner was a preparation of roasted bacon stocked up by the orcs and paired with fragrant soup. It was incredibly delicious.

Everyone was enjoying their meal, but Xiao Lin was feeling a little distressed. Although the water sprayed by the healer seemed to be working and gradually began reducing the pain, he still could not touch anything yet. Simply holding the dishes would send waves of pain coming over him.

The ever-attentive Gu Xiaoyue noticed Xiao Lin's embarrassment and pursed her lips, as if thinking of something. Her cold face felt slightly warm and she looked a little hesitant. Xiao Lin, who had also been keeping watch over her, realized something and looked over with a blatantly pitiful expression.

Most of the others noticed that the atmosphere had become a little odd. Those who were about to volunteer themselves by standing up immediately turned away, as if they had not seen anything.

It was the instructor Qin Chuan who broke the atmosphere. He had just filled his bowl with broth when he turned back and happened to catch Xiao Lin's pitiful appearance. Having already known about Xiao Lin's injury, Qin Chuan walked over with the broth and sat down next to Xiao Lin, saying, "I almost forgot that your hand still hurts. I'll feed you!"

Xiao Lin's eyes twitched a few times, but he could not possibly reject it. He forced a smile that looked even uglier than a crying mug and said thank you. When he looked at Gu Xiaoyue again, she seemed to have let out a sigh of relief and turned away.

In fact, he originally wanted to have a chat with Gu Xiaoyue, but in that atmosphere, she would definitely have little to say in front of everyone.

The acting class monitors once again gathered in a separate room for a meeting. Since the establishment of this temporary headquarters, everyone seemed very keen to exercise the power of the battlefield commander. They frequently did not listen to each other and were constantly at each other's necks, resulting in reduced efficiency. Even so, any decision to be made could only be issued from the command headquarters.

Xiao Lin was late, and his snow-white bandage made many of the others bow their heads in shame. Xiao Lin was the only one who took the initiative to leave the fortress during that afternoon's battle.

"Our casualties today are quite serious, but it's not quite appropriate to disclose some of the data to the rest. I'm worried it will affect morale. Let me explain everything first."

The person who spoke was a tall and thin man. His name was Sheng Guo, and he was the monitor of Class Eight. Since he was responsible for the battlefield statistics, the opening remarks of that meeting started with him.

"We lost eight archer towers. I've spoken with the architect just now and it's basically impossible to repair them. As long as the orcs continue to go on the offensive tomorrow, our remaining defense towers may only be able to support three more days at most."

"Three days? That quick? I remember we had dozens of defense towers!" Han Manman from Class Four did not seem to agree.

Xiao Lin said, "Class Eight's statistics are correct. Every time we lose a defense tower, it means that the orcs will attack even stronger the next round. May I remind you that the spell towers use far more energy than we initially thought."

Xiao Lin briefly described the operation process of the spell device on the lower magic tower. Among them, the inventory did not have any of those metal pieces that needed to be replaced whenever the spell device was used to fire. They did not find anything similar in the orcs' warehouse either, which meant that there was an absence of replacement metal pieces. That the remaining spell towers would become useless was certainly a possibility.

Xiao Lin was thrust into the limelight that day, and although everyone criticized his statement silently in their hearts, his words made them stop and think for a long time. Depressingly, they soon discovered the fact that things were not looking very optimistic.

That day's defensive battle seemed like a victory, but judging from the results, why did it appear as though they were on the brink of defeat?

"How long can the spell tower's metal pieces last?" Cheng Ming interrupted everyone's thoughts.

“One day.” Xiao Lin gave an answer so firm that Class Eight’s monitor could not even refute. They had no right to object since they were not privy to the information Xiao Lin had, and he was the only one who had actually been inside the defense tower.

No one could voice any opinion on that.

“What if we use them sparingly? For example, you mentioned that the process of cooling and replacing the metal pieces takes only a minute or two once a person is proficient in it. We’ll extend that duration. How about changing it to fire only once every five minutes?” Han Manman’s spoke optimistically. In fact, there were only three women among the acting class monitors, and the natural advantage of a woman was that they could get a little bit of preferential treatment. However, Han Manman was an exception.

As soon as she finished speaking, Class Twelve’s monitor Chen Dao rolled his eyes at her. The boy who had not even graduated from high school did not see eye-to-eye with Han Manman and they often clashed heads with each other. At that point, he mocked her, “Those who don’t understand spells should keep their mouth shut! Everyone saw it from today’s battle. Even though the spell tower’s firing intervals are quite long, they’re very powerful. The burning effect that comes along is also useful in blocking the orc’s charging direction. The reason we’re able to have this meeting today is only because of the spell tower’s uninterrupted attacks!”

Xiao Lin did not want to target anyone specifically, but he stated the facts all the same. “Yes, in the second half of today’s battle, one of the main reasons why the orcs were able to attack was because the operator of the spell tower had poor mental strength, which caused the firing speed to slow down significantly. My suggestion for tomorrow’s battle is not only to extend the firing interval, but also to shorten the time!”

Feeling slightly embarrassed, Han Manman said, “But you just said that the process from cooling to replacing the metal sheet is an irreplaceable one. How do you plan to shorten the time!”

Xiao Lin glanced at her like an idiot, paused for a moment, and continued. “I did say that this process is indispensable, but what if someone else was arranged to take charge?”

“You’re suggesting for two people to board the same tower?”

“Yes. Two or three people is ideal!”

“That’s not good. We only have this small number of people, and if we assign others to go out, the power to defend the city will be greatly weakened.”

Xiao Lin said, “I don’t think our strength in defending the city will be weakened. In fact, if you carefully count the results of today’s battle, did the kills of those who used archery for the first time in the long-range attack add up to the total number killed by one defense tower? Those who excelled at close combat didn’t contribute much when defending the city. It’d be better to have them on the tower to help. Moreover, if the orcs charged over, they could also defend their spot.”

His words made some of them turn their heads in some embarrassment. There were a few close combat specialists among the acting class monitors, and some—like Cheng Ming—even admitted it and acknowledged Xiao Lin’s words.

With Cheng Ming's support, Xiao Lin's resolution passed smoothly.

A point to note was that all measures and plans to be implemented was decided by the temporary headquarters through voting. That was something Zhou Feng and Qin Chuan argued in private with Xiao Lin for quite some time.

Although the voting system was designed to allow 12 monitors of equal status to maintain balance and fairness, such so-called democracy could sometimes be a huge detriment when a battlefield emergency arose.

Chapter 246 - Xiao Lin's Supervision of the Battle

Chapter 246: Xiao Lin's Supervision of the Battle

At dawn the next day, everyone was still fast asleep when the low and rapid sound of war drums rang just before the sun came up. Amidst the loud drumming, the well-prepared orc infantry had already begun to advance towards the foot of the mountain from the plains.

Although there would always be people who expected the orcs to give up the siege due to the heavy losses, their hopes were quickly dashed. With shouts and yells, they woke everyone who was still asleep and quickly put on their equipment before heading to the fortress wall.

Based on the decision of the previous day's meeting, the number of people sent out to board the defense towers were two instead of one. The additional person would be responsible for assisting in replacing and cooling the firing port's metal pieces. The archer tower also required assistance, with additional manpower tasked to pull the bowstring so the person shooting it would only need to aim and fire. That way, their efficiency would be greatly improved.

Xiao Lin was injured, but after waking up in the morning, he actually felt that the pain had subsided considerably. However, he was unsure whether it was due to the effectiveness of the healer's medicine or if it was the healing effect of his own primary dragon blood. Simply put, he felt able enough to join in the battle, but many people stopped him from doing so.

Xiao Lin had bravely volunteered to battle the day before, causing many of the acting monitors to feel as though they lost some of their pride. If he was allowed to enter the battlefield with injuries, everyone else's admiration for him would probably skyrocket to levels of worship.

For members of one's own class to admire another acting class monitor was utterly unacceptable, at least in the eyes of someone like Han Manman. For that reason, they tried their best to stop Xiao Lin from going out to battle again that day.

Meanwhile, individuals like Cheng Ming, Chen Dao, and the others, did so out of kindness. The battle had only just begun and Xiao Lin did not have to be so desperate. Chen Dao even pouted and remarked, "You underestimate us a little too much! If your absence means this fortress can be

breached, there' won't be any need to continue the exam anymore. We can just surrender and go back to the academy!"

In the end, Xiao Lin heeded everyone's opinion and chose to supervise the battle from the top of the wall. In fact, he was still rather worried that the incomplete recovery of his injury would affect his use of swordsmanship. As a result, he did not dare to loosen the bandage before he was completely healed, so the only role he could do was supervise the battle.

The orcs lost nearly one-fifth of their troops a day ago, but they still poured in after spreading out the area they covered. They still had an absolute advantage in terms of numbers, but compared to the previous day, the freshmen on the fortress were much more mentally prepared. No longer rookies who barely survived the battle's early stages, they no longer have the same panicked look they had a day ago when they saw the huge number of orcs.

Xiao Lin's duty to supervise the battle was only nominal. Most of the time, he could only choose to watch the battle silently from one side. That was the cause of embarrassment for most melee specialists, and also formed the reason for the willingness to ascend the defense tower to help out. The previous day's battle made them realize that Planet Norma's people were not pushovers. One could not hope to finish them off just by taking a bow and arrow to them.

The orcs' special physique afforded them defensive strength, even when their skin was bare. If a layman—someone who was not a professional archer and had insufficient strength to fire arrows—tried to shoot, the result would hardly have any lethal effect.

Xiao Lin did not take archery courses and was therefore unable to express any opinion on that. He observed the orcs' attack and found that it did not weaken at all compared to the previous day. In any case however, the number of individuals were lesser, and even though there were fewer archer towers, the flame balls and arrows raining from the sky was still capable of suppressing the orcs.

The orcs in the front row were directly blown into bits by the oncoming flame balls. Any remaining orcs that were still alive became hedgehogs after a slew of arrows pierced them. Those arrows were fired by the large crossbow and was even sharper than an épée, capable of piercing the orcs' hard skin without any difficulty.

Xiao Lin looked back at the endless turquoise sea. The silver fleet that was suspected to be the elves has not moved at all since the earlier day. The acting class monitors began to believe that the fleet really was just watching everything in safety while the others engaged in the fight.

Even so, Xiao Lin did not dare to let his guard down. Regardless of how the other classes dealt with those elves, he always arranged someone from his own class to keep watch of the fleet even if that meant the person would have to ignore the attacking orcs.

Gu Xiaoyue had only learnt the Ice Bullet as her offensive spell, but it was incredibly powerful because of her own strength. In fact, its effect was no weaker than the strongest low-level spell, which was the Flame Ball. The slowing-down effect produced by the ice bullet could effectively contain the momentum of the orcs' charging vanguard.

In addition, Gu Xiaoyue's method of casting spells was simple and quick. She could complete several complex gestures in the blink of an eye. Whether in terms of spell casting efficiency or destructive power, she was more or less as effective as ten other ordinary students.

When Xiao Lin shifted his gaze from Gu Xiaoyue to the other spellcasting freshmen, the sight was too horrible to endure. Xiao Lin casually observed a few people and saw that their casting actions were all wrong. A direct consequence was that either the gathered elements became less dense, or the formation was defective after everything was combined. The impact on the spell's power was significant, and failure to cast spells was a very common sight.

Xiao Lin finally could not stand it anymore, and moreover, he felt that he should at least be doing something. The simulation battle was just as important to everyone else as it was to him, and simply watching without doing anything made him feel very uneasy.

“Hey, your moves are wrong. You have to straighten your forearm, otherwise you won't be able to gather enough elements!”

“Tell me, why are you chanting so softly! Are you from a family of mosquitoes or something? The fire element is a violent one. If you don't manifest it more carefully, you won't succeed in casting the spell!”

“For heaven's sake! Don't close your eyes when you throw the flame ball. You may be a girl, but you can't be that scared right? Your perception level isn't high enough that you can accurately aim your spell with your eyes closed!”

...

The other acting monitors were helpless when they found that Xiao Lin was zealously beginning to perform his duties in supervising the war. In fact, many of them might not necessarily be unaware of such a basic principle: mistakes in the course of a tight situation might be excusable, but the kind of mistakes they made would be difficult to change later on if such bad habits were not corrected.

Everyone was fully engaged in the battle after the battle started, and there was really not much time to pay attention to everyone else. However, since Xiao Lin was only a bystander for the time being, many of those mistakes were swiftly corrected after he gave them a reminder.

That was not enough to satisfy Xiao Lin. Since he had learned the modified Flame Bomb and also studied the original Flame Ball, he personally felt that the original spell's casting method was too cumbersome. Even if he did not simplify the Flame Ball to the level of the Flame Bomb, it was still beneficial to improve it slightly.

Chapter 247 - Dangerous Situation

Chapter 247: Dangerous Situation

Those who were still casting the Flame Ball were a little perplexed with Xiao Lin's guidance. The spellcasting movements and chants that they learnt were the standard ones that they learnt in class, but truthfully speaking, there was no absolute criterion for spellcasting movements. The key was gathering the elements up and recombining them using the established order.

The process of achieving that goal was endless and varied, but the academy was worried that the students might deviate from the right way. After all, many bad habits were difficult to change once firmly entrenched into a beginner, which was why the academy had always taught the most standard moves to the students only.

In fact, Xiao Lin did not have much experience in that and could only give some guidance to the freshmen who used the Flame Ball. He never once talked about any other spells for fear that his guidance was erroneous.

As for the Flame Ball, not even Gu Xiaoyue might be able to match Xiao Lin as of right then. The skill book Xiao Lin had was left by the masters of years past, and many of the lessons were very helpful to the freshmen even if they only learnt a fraction of it.

Its effects were unknown, but judging from the looks of surprise on the faces of those who accepted Xiao Lin's suggestions, it ought to be rather good.

A one- to two-second increase in casting speed, or even a 10% increase in power, was a big enough effect in fierce battles.

The orcs' siege was more violent than the previous day and there was no stopping them even when noon came. Everyone on the inner side of the fortress had to grit their teeth and continue the fight.

Humans were not machines after all, so no matter how powerful those defense towers were, it was still humans that operated them. It was a repeat of the previous day, where more archer towers were destroyed in that afternoon's closely-fought tussle, as the orcs had finally approached the outermost line of defense.

The earlier arrangement finally came into play at this moment. Each arrow tower was equipped with two people, and one of them would take out the weapon and descend the tower to engage in a direct fight. That was the first time they faced battle at knife point after two days of war.

An average-strength freshman was hardly capable of holding out against an orc in a one-on-one battle, and although the end result was more or less the same, they were at least able to stall some time and prevent the outer defense towers to be destroyed less quickly.

The fierce fights intensified, and the casualties on the fortress began increasing rapidly. Most deaths were downright tragic, and the orcs had clearly surpassed them in terms of fighting spirit. Xiao Lin even saw a seriously injured and soon-to-be-dead orc tear the flesh off another person's face. The person was probably scared out of their wits when they turned around to flee back to the fortress. Sadly, the person only managed to run halfway before a weapon was thrown right into his heart from behind.

Blood spilled all over the hillside, and it was finally the humans who contributed a larger amount of blood.

At that point, the effects of Xiao Lin's continuous guidance and pointers were gradually beginning to show. The extra efficiency gained whenever they casted spells afforded them sufficient mental power to continue casting spells in the remaining time.

It might not have been obvious in the morning, but the added efficiency began manifesting itself when the war fell into a stalemate. The suppressive spell attacks from the fortress wall were very important, especially when the surrounding spell towers were starting to misfire. Based on Xiao Lin's understanding of war in that world, a mage unit was almost equivalent to the artillery on Earth—its biggest function was to stunt the enemy range of advancement and suppress any attacks.

Several class monitors were also feeling the pressure. They ran back and forth, either boosting morale or loudly condemning those who were gradually being overtaken by fear. In short, everyone was giving it their all as much as possible.

After spending all that time guiding them, Xiao Lin had already said everything that needed to be said. As he looked at the worrying situation below the wall, almost half the defense towers seemed to be in danger. About ten or so minutes ago, Cheng Ming—who had also realized the importance of those peripheral defense towers—decisively led a charge consisting of those who could stare death in the face. They formed a temporary line of defense in front of the defense towers to delay the damage inflicted by the orcs.

The effect however, was not that great. In the end, the orcs were simply overwhelming in their number. They had invested a total of more than 3,000 individuals in their troops, which was enough to attack a small town. Meanwhile, the students inside the fortress added up to only a few hundred people.

Xiao Lin waved his hand, and tore off the bandage after realizing he was not in too much pain. Although Zhou Feng and Qin Chuan immediately rushed forth to stop him, Xiao Lin glanced at his rosy palm and stunned the both of them with the effects of his recovery.

"It's fine now."

"You're going to join the battle?" Qin Chuan asked in a doubtful tone.

Zhou Feng had been with Xiao Lin for longer, and to some extent, understood the latter's character more. Still, he did not approve of it. "What's the use of you going up there! I'll stick to the earlier suggestion, that it might be better to give this fortress up."

Xiao Lin smiled bitterly and shook his head. Strategically speaking, the resurrection tower was still under construction within the fortress and must not be abandoned. Otherwise, it would mean that the battle was a complete failure. From a personal point of view, even if they retreated, they had absolutely nowhere to go. It was an endless sea behind them, where an unnamed fleet was lying in wait!

Before he left, Xiao Lin did not forget to request the Elementary Speed Boost spell from Gu Xiaoyue. It was not very useful in defensive battles, because elementary speed boosts only increased one's movement speed, not one's attack speed. However, she did not have the habit of asking in too much detail, so even though she was a little confused, she decided to just wave her wand and bestow a halo on Xiao Lin.

"Don't worry! I won't let you die here, even if it means fighting with all my life!" After leaving them with that sentence, Xiao Lin strode out of the fortress. Gu Xiaoyue's expression was still as cold as ever, but her heart tightened for some unknown reason.

On that occasion however, there were two other squad leaders and three instructors who went along with Xiao Lin. As if sensing the moment the fortress door opened, a small group of orcs left the opponents they were engaged with and did not seem to care that their backs were completely open to attacks. They immediately rushed toward the soon-to-be closed door, intending to use their bodies to jam a gap and stop it from being shut.

Xiao Lin sneered slightly. He raised the Holy Soul Sword up high, and swung an arc in front of his body. Flame sword aura shot out, and the range of its attack was relatively far-reaching. The orcs, which were about seven or eight meters away, were caught off guard and failed to defend themselves. One individual was sliced in half on the spot, with its colorful internal organs spurting all over the sky. The remaining two or three orcs were also blasted away by the fire and rolled down the hillside.

“Find somewhere to defend yourselves. Don’t stand in my way!”

After Xiao Lin uttered that sentence, he did not hesitate to turn on his Miracle skill and transform all his attributes to agility. Then, he executed the Phantom Steps and rushed to the frontline of the battlefield.

Chapter 248 - Comeback

Chapter 248: Comeback

The class monitors and instructors looked at each other, but before they could react, the only thing they saw was a blur because Xiao Lin had darted more than 10 meters ahead. The monitors did not think much of it, but the instructors were utterly shocked to the core. As instructors, they had a year’s worth of studying under their belt but could never match up with that kind of speed.

Xiao Lin did not leave the others behind because he arrogantly believed he could deal with all the orcs on his own, but rather, he did so because he had to kill as many orcs as quickly as possible. He was also fully aware that no one else could keep up with him in that state of his.

After the first two battles, Xiao Lin had a pretty good idea of his own combat strength. Swordsmanship alone would be difficult to cause fatal damage to the orcs. If he wanted to kill them as quickly as possible, it was imperative that he use the flame sword aura. He relied on that the most at present, but the drawbacks of the flame sword aura were also obvious during the previous battles—it consumed a significant amount of both mental and physical strength.

However, there was no time to worry about how much strength would be used up and Xiao Lin did not hold back in the slightest. The Elementary Speed Boost’s speed increase, coupled with the Phantom Steps complex footwork, enabled Xiao Lin’s flexible posture to appear practically anywhere in the hillside. As long as a defense tower was surrounded by orcs, Xiao Lin would immediately abandon the enemy in his hand and rush to reinforce it quickly.

The hill was very small to begin with, so Xiao Lin—who was moving constantly at high speed—mistakenly gave everyone the impression that he could actually teleport. He would appear like a savior wherever there was a crisis. The stability of the defense tower thus allowed the long-range firepower to continue piling the pressure.

Within a mere ten minutes, the outermost line of defense that had been breached was almost instantly brought back to safety with Xiao Lin's approach. Although there were still a few monitors like Cheng Ming on the battlefield, everyone from the fortress wall could clearly see that Cheng Ming and the rest played a very limited role. They might be able to protect a single defense tower, but there was no way for them to protect everything.

Xiao Lin was the only one who could do so, and it was not an exaggeration to say that he was turning the tables on the situation. His Miracle skill transforming all his attributes into agility, Gu Xiaoyue's Elementary Speed Boost spell, and his excellent Phantom Step allowed his figure to shuttle freely on the battlefield like a ghost. His flame-coated sword aura was like the sharpest of knives, pulverizing the orcs at every turn.

The orcs were also aware of how troublesome he was, but it was only when they attempted to circle Xiao Lin that he engaged them in annoyance. His purpose was very clear, which was to protect the defense tower. As long as the enemy turned his target to himself, he would immediately slip away. He did not enjoy fighting at all, and the clumsy orcs could not nearly catch up to him in terms of speed anyway.

Han Manman and the others gritted their teeth when they saw him. After all, an individual had little strength in a war and could not possibly influence the final moments of a battle. They were very much aware of that universal truth, which was why they decided to set up a temporary headquarters. It was hoped that all 12 classes would be united by that.

In spite of that, everyone had also overlooked a very important issue. The war was one that took place in Planet Norma, and judging from the situation that day, it was only a very small one, perhaps not even on the level of a local-scale war. Would it really be possible to control the outcome of a battle in that world if one's personal strength was strong enough?

What Xiao Lin did undoubtedly shocked everyone. Perhaps the rest might have more knowledge about the war in Planet Norma after that battle.

However, Xiao Lin was actually in agony. The peak of Phantom Step and Miracle also required a lot of physical strength to support, let alone with the flame sword aura. Whenever he filled the defense line to help defend the defense tower, the energy he expended was truly extraordinary.

Half an hour later, Xiao Lin, who was sweating profusely, finally slumped weakly on the ground and panted heavily. His Miracle skill could no longer be maintained, he even found it difficult to lift his sword. His feet became extremely heavy, and neither the Phantom Step nor the flame sword aura could continue to be used. A wry smile appeared on his face and he finally reached the limit.

An orc nearby noticed his fatigue and charged over with a roar. Xiao Lin had to admire the fighting spirit of those orcs. He had tortured and killed them so brutally earlier but they remained fearless. Be that as it may, no race in the world was without weaknesses.

Therefore, Xiao Lin took a deep breath and squeezed out his last strength. He raised the Holy Soul Sword with both hands only barely, and amidst the hum of the sword's edge, a swordsman covered in old heavy armor gradually appeared from the lingering smoke.

The Holy Soul Summoning ability attached to the Holy Soul Sword required the death of a large number of creatures as a sacrifice for a successful summon. In fact, that was his main purpose.

When he used his flame sword aura half an hour ago, the orcs killed by his sword had definitely fulfilled the prerequisite for a sufficient sacrifice.

“Go! Get rid of these orcs!” Xiao Lin sneered slightly when he looked at the orcs rushing over. The orcs were too naïve if they thought they could kill him when he lacked any strength.

The undead swordsman held his épée with both hands and rushed fearlessly toward the group of seven or eight orcs. His speed was not quick and he was soon surrounded by several orcs. Seven or eight battle axes fell right on the swordsman’s body, but the latter did not react at all. He lowered his épée slightly and swung it, pushing back the orcs around him and causing them to tumble onto the ground.

Xiao Lin hurriedly left after observing everything briefly. He temporarily lacked combat effectiveness and did not want to continue pretending to be the hero. Lu Renjia gave his assurance that the summoned swordsman had Bronze-rank strength when he was promoting the Holy Soul Sword, but from the simple observation earlier, the undead swordsman’s Basic Swordsmanship was estimated to be LV6 or LV7 at most. Its strength was hardly Bronze-rank.

Of course, it might also be the case that Xiao Lin was unfamiliar with the undead creatures, but in short, the combat power of an undead swordsman could only be regarded as ordinary at best. Fortunately, as an undead person, the undead swordsman’s body was that of a soul that was practically impervious to all forms of physical attacks. The exception would be if enchanted weapons or elemental sword aura were used to attack it.

Moreover, orcs have a natural fear of undead which owed a lot to the history of the orcs, but Xiao Lin—who had been absent from school for more than a month—obviously knew little about it.

The appearance of the undead swordsman, coupled with the repeated setbacks in the attack, finally brought down the orcs’ morale and their attack speed slowed down gradually. Xiao Lin paid no mind to the coldness shown by the others when he returned to the fortress. He ignored all the other acting class monitors who were present there and said unceremoniously, “Immediately organize an attack and cooperate with Cheng Ming for a counterattack! The orcs’ morale has dropped and this is our best opportunity. As long as this counterattack succeeds, we might be able to fight on for many more days!”

Chapter 249 - The Fleet's Sudden Intervention

Chapter 249: The Fleet’s Sudden Intervention

Xiao Lin’s direct order ruffled the feathers of several acting class monitors. The essence of the temporary headquarters was to prevent one or two class monitors from directly controlling the chain of command. However, as much as they silently disagreed with Xiao Lin, were they really going to wait for a meeting and a discussion if they were really facing an emergency situation?

“Come on guys, charge with me!” Zhou Feng’s first action was to make that statement. As the interim group leader appointed by Xiao Lin, he certainly understood that he had to stand firmly on

Xiao Lin's side at such a time. He immediately waved his hand, and more than 20 people followed him out of the fortress.

The other classes could no longer decline, and anyone could tell that it was indeed a good opportunity to defeat the orcs in one fell swoop. A similar chance might not present itself again if they did not seize it right then.

More people rushed out of the fortress and charged down the hill, launching an assault on the orcs when the latter's fighting spirit had been shaken. The move had undoubtedly taken the orcs by surprise, as they never expected the humans to take the initiative and attack since they had been passively defending for two consecutive days.

Xiao Lin was panting with exhaustion, but it did not prevent him from standing on the city wall and continuing to command the undead swordsman. He was also curious about the maximum command range of the summoned soul and he thought it best to collect some information about it.

The undead swordsman's fighting power was not that strong, and after a prolonged fight with the group of seven or eight orcs, only one had been killed. The opponent however, had no intention of fighting at that moment and chose to retreat.

Xiao Lin therefore continued to direct the swordsman forward. Its function was not to kill, but to pester the enemy like a fishbone stuck in their throat, where neither spitting out or swallowing would do any good. However, in a delicate battle situation where the orcs were in a stalemate and even started losing the upper hand gradually, the fishbone would finally become the last straw that broke the camel's back.

Waves of brown bodies finally began a large-scale retreat. After fighting for nearly a whole day and leaving behind countless broken corpses, the orc's attacks proved unfruitful.

There were cheers from the fortress, and Xiao Lin also smiled before breathing a sigh of relief. On the hillside, the team that went out of the city did not give up after Cheng Ming took charge, but chose to continue the pursuit, even if it raised the eyebrows of some class monitors. They were worried that doing so would only increase the losses, but Xiao Lin immediately refuted their doubts.

"We need enough time and space to defend and we must drive the orcs farther away. We have run out of defense towers. We have to continue to build more!"

Everyone, including Xiao Lin, started thinking about what needed to be done later on. There were no more surprises at the end of that battle, and the one thing they could look forward to was the number of orcs that would eventually be eliminated.

However, things most often go wrong in the world of times. A loud cry interrupted Xiao Lin's contemplation, and the person who had been assigned to stare at the mysterious fleet earlier anxiously shouted, "Class Monitor, look! The fleet is attacking!"

When Xiao Lin turned his head in shock, all he saw was a light green light beam gushing out from one of the silver warships. It soared straight into the clouds up high, then traveled in a huge arc before landing almost vertically on the battlefield.

Boom!

The next minute, that beam of light landed accurately on the summoned undead swordsman. Xiao Lin could only feel a sharp pain in his mind before completely losing all sense of the swordsman.

The unexpected attack shocked everyone, and the pursuit was forced to stop. Although the fleet returned to calm after that, and it looked as if nothing happened at all, no one dared to ignore them anymore.

Cheng Ming quickly brought his people back. The one thing that made everyone feel relieved was that the beam did not cause any casualties to the humans. It was a little weird when they pondered about it, for it appeared to be an astonishing attack that had no casualties.

“It’s a reminder! That fleet is reminding us that they are not onlookers!” Cheng Ming sighed with regret. They were just one step away from completely driving the orcs out of that area, but unfortunately, the orcs were only temporarily defeated and would continue to regroup after the retreat.

“Actually, I think it’s all Xiao Lin’s fault!” Han Manman spoke sharply and immediately lashed out at Xiao Lin, who was resting and sitting at one side. “Since we have no casualties, it means that the fleet is only targeting that fully-armored swordsman. I’ve been paying close attention to the battlefield, and you were the one who summoned that swordsman, Xiao Lin!”

Some people were stunned. Indeed, they had not noticed how the swordsman appeared when they were on the battlefield and thought that it was merely their classmate.

“The situation this afternoon was clear for all of us to see. If it weren’t for Xiao Lin’s help in filling up the loopholes in the defense line, we would probably lose more defense towers, or even all of our peripheral defensive line!” Cheng Ming did not hesitate to stand on Xiao Lin’s side.

“In fact, there’s nothing unexpected about this. We’ve been treating that silver fleet as if they’re the enemy and this hypothesis is now confirmed. Since they’re the enemy, they will step in eventually. What’s the difference if they do it now?” Many people spoke on behalf of Xiao Lin, and even those who were neutral to him before could not help but admire him after seeing his astounding fighting performance that afternoon.

Han Manman did not think that much. She knew that it was impossible to blame Xiao Lin for such a thing, but she simply wanted to sour his reputation. After all, Xiao Lin’s performance was far too eye-catching during the previous two days, and the jealousy inside her heart had accumulated even more.

Chen Dao’s focus has always been different. “It’s strange when you mention it. Were we taught summoning spells in class? Well, I didn’t know about it. Did you, Gu Xiaoyue?”

Gu Xiaoyue, who was not far away, shook her head calmly.

Chen Dao’s face was full of curiosity. “How did you learn this summoning spell? Is it easy? Please teach me!”

Other people began noticing that fact when Chen Dao reminded them. Xiao Lin was the first to master a spell that even Chen Dao and Gu Xiaoyue had not mastered, and it was even more incredible than they expected. All of a sudden, they recalled something even more amazing—the fact that Xiao Lin was rumored to be studying both magic and martial arts!

Evidence of his strength could be seen earlier that afternoon, and it seemed that his magic abilities were quite advanced!

A person's instinct was always to envy and admire the strong. It was particularly the case in times like that, as Xiao Lin's outstanding strength made ordinary students feel more at ease.

Xiao Lin smiled wryly. When Han Manman launched that scathing attack at him, he did not even bother to explain anything. Rather, it should be said that he was really not in the mood to focus on such things at that moment.

Xiao Lin was incredibly tired, and it was not only a physical tiredness. The last beam of light was indeed directed at the undead swordsman, and the impact on him was quite significant. The faint pain was still stinging his mind, even at that moment.

Chapter 250 - An Unexpected Discovery in the Command Room (Part 1)

Chapter 250: An Unexpected Discovery in the Command Room (Part 1)

It was the second time he used the summoning skill that came along with the Holy Soul Sword. When he first used it, the undead swordsman disappeared automatically after the summoning time limit was reached. According to Qin Chuan however, Xiao Lin was in a state of rampage and fought madly with the orc commander at the time. Xiao Lin did not feel anything at all.

The second time, however, when the undead swordsman was eliminated, the sting nearly made Xiao Lin faint on the spot. He was unsure whether the effect was a shortcoming of the Holy Soul Summoning skill or because of the fleet's unique attack.

Casualty statistics were the norm after a battle. The casualties on the fortress were much more serious than yesterday, with more than 50 deaths and nearly 50 minor and serious injuries. Meanwhile, the orcs left more than 800 corpses on the plains and hillsides, and the good news was that the orcs had also lost more than half of their infantry.

It was unfortunate that the mysterious fleet's sudden intervention left a lingering fear over everyone's hearts. There was no time to celebrate. That night itself, the acting class monitors rejected some people's suggestions to celebrate and kept their guards up instead. They were not worried about the orcs' nighttime attack, but were instead wary that the fleet might suddenly commence with a landfall.

According to Xiao Lin's original plan that day, they were initially prepared to build more defense towers after completely defeating the half-crippled orc infantry. With excellent architects on their side, they could continue to consolidate their defenses as long as they could buy enough time.

Xiao Lin would have been naive to think that the orc infantry were the sole enemies of that monthly test. It was impossible. The main orc wolf cavalry was still marching toward Dawn City on the front line, and their reinforcements would definitely continue to march there.

Xiao Lin was beginning to understand why that battle failed in history. Dawn Academy was fully prepared of course, and they could actually drag it even longer if they relied on the excellent lethality of the defense tower. However, they had not considered the silver fleet at all.

Compared with the nervousness and anxiety of class monitors and instructors, the ordinary students were not as worried as they thought. After dinner, Xiao Lin walked around the fortress, hoping to find something usable, and he occasionally heard other people's conversation along the way. There were no leisure and entertainment facilities, not even poker cards, so chatting was the only thing they could do there.

"F*ck! It was some damn luck we had today! We had it all in the bag!"

"What's there to cry about? Even if you guard it for one day, it's only twenty redemption points."

"What do you mean by that? Are you saying those redemption points aren't enough?"

"It's a question of whether or not we're actually able to get it! Tell me, guys, haven't you noticed? Do you think this battle really succeeded in history?"

"Uh, this..."

"If it's down to things that can't be changed in history, I don't think we'll have the ability to change the results! Perhaps this is the biggest obstacle in this monthly exam!"

"That's right, it's not like we wanna compete for the position of class monitor. It doesn't matter if we don't get a good grade. "

"We've guarded it for seven days now. The reward is a hundred and forty redemption points, plus the five hundred for the first task. That's quite a lot already."

"There's still another two weeks before we break even! After that, we'll leave it to fate!"

...

Xiao Lin frowned and sighed to himself. After all, the war was not real. Although the academy wanted students to adapt as much as possible to a real war by setting the monthly test simulation realm as closely to reality as possible, it was still unable to change their mentality.

'There's still another two weeks before we break even.'

The meaning of this sentence was obvious—the rewards for the second task were 20 redemption points for each day they stayed there. After half a month, all the surviving people would accumulate more than 1,000 redemption points, which just so happened to be the price of a bottle of basic Lifewater.

After that, they had nothing to lose even if they were killed by the orcs. That was probably what everyone was thinking at the moment.

Xiao Lin could not refute such an idea, and he could actually comfort himself with such optimism too. Alas he could not, as only two years remaining of Gu Xiaoyue's lifespan. She must not be allowed to die. Even though he was troubled by why the basic Lifewater failed to have any effect, it was not the time to think about such things.

Xiao Lin came to the command room that originally belonged to the orc commander. The empty room looked very crude, and in the center was a huge stone table. The pillars present on both sides were carved with totem runes unique to the orc race.

They searched the entire place on the day they attacked the fortress, but were unfortunate not to find anything useful. The only thing that seemed to be of some utility was the map. Several orcs were burning maps and papers when the students charged in, but despite being able to save most of the papers, only half the map remained. Nevertheless, it still appeared to come in handy somewhat.

Meanwhile, the other papers did not appear very useful. In fact, calling it paper was not entirely accurate. Orcs did not have the craftsmanship skill to make paper, and things which could easily be crushed did not interest them at all. They usually write it down on leather paper, which was made of cleaned beast fur.

Although the orcs also spoke Normese, their main daily language was still Orcish. As a result, no one could understand the seized documents and so left them alone and unattended. They were still in their freshman year, so they had yet to reach the stage where Orcish was an elective.

Xiao Lin took those documents out again and then spread them out one by one on the stone table. He was trying to find some clues from them. It went without saying that he could not understand those words, but all he hoped for was a map or some kind of clue left behind. It was a pity that the orcs resisted very stubbornly during the siege and no captives were held. Xiao Lin was therefore deprived of a chance to replicate Orcish.

The command room was very dim, with only a lamp ignited using animal fat. Aside from the dim light, it also exuded a strong stench. Unless it was a last resort, none of the students wanted to light that kind of lamp at night.

Xiao Lin had to lie his upper body flat on the stone table and lean closer to get a better look. God knows how long had passed before he stood up again with a sore waist and a painful back. He sighed in disappointment. Everything that happened in the past two days gnawed at his mind and he suspected all their actions were actually a trap for the enemy. Unfortunately, there was neither enough evidence nor anything that could be of use.

Xiao Lin still did not give up. He turned his gaze to the couple of torn paper next to him. They had been torn apart by the orcs before the students charged in. After taking over the fortress, someone

initially wanted to throw the paper away, but Xiao Lin and Cheng Ming thought carefully again before deciding to keep it. Still, no one expected to actually get anything from it.